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DON ORSINO.<sup>1</sup>

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## CHAPTER XIII.

DEL FERICE kept his word and arranged matters for Orsino with a speed and skill which excited the latter's admiration. The affair was not indeed very complicated though it involved a deed of sale, the transfer of a mortgage, and a deed of partnership between Orsino Saracinesca and Andrea Contini, architect, under the style "Andrea Contini and Company," besides a contract between this firm of the one party and the bank, in which Del Ferice was a director, of the other; the partners agreeing to continue the building of the half-finished house, and the bank binding itself to advance small sums up to a certain amount for current expenses of material and workmen's wages. Orsino signed everything required of him after reading the documents, and Andrea Contini followed his example.

The architect was a tall man with bright brown eyes, a dark and somewhat ragged beard, close-cropped hair, a prominent bony forehead, and large, coarsely-shaped, thin ears oddly set upon his head. He habitually wore a dark overcoat, of which the collar was generally turned up on one side and not on the other. Judging from the appearance of his strong shoes he had always been walking a long distance over bad roads, and when it had

rained within the week his trousers were generally bespattered with mud to a considerable height above the heel. He habitually carried an extinguished cigar between his teeth, of which he chewed the thin black end uneasily. Orsino fancied that he might be about eight-and-twenty years old, and was not altogether displeased with his appearance. He was not at all like the majority of his kind, who, in Rome at least, usually affect a scrupulous dandyism of attire and an uncommon refinement of manner. Whatever Contini's faults might prove to be, Orsino did not believe that they would turn out to be those of idleness or vanity. How far he was right in his judgment will appear before long, but he conceived his partner to be gifted, frank, enthusiastic, and careless of outward forms.

As for the architect himself, he surveyed Orsino with a sort of sympathetic curiosity which the latter would have thought unpleasantly familiar if he had understood it. Contini had never spoken before with any more exalted personage than Del Ferice, and he studied the young aristocrat as though he were a being from another world. He hesitated some time as to the proper mode of addressing him, and at last decided to call him "Signor Principe." Orsino seemed quite satisfied with this, and the archi-

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tect was inwardly pleased when the young man said "Signor Contini" instead of Contini alone. It was quite clear that Del Ferice had already acquainted him with all the details of the situation, for he seemed to understand all the documents at a glance, picking out and examining the important clauses with unfailing acuteness, and pointing with his finger to the place where Orsino was to sign his name.

At the end of the interview Orsino shook hands with Del Ferice and thanked him warmly for his kindness, after which he and his partner went out together. They stood side by side upon the pavement for a few seconds, each wondering what the other was going to say.

"Perhaps we had better go and look at the house, Signor Principe," observed Contini, in the midst of an ineffectual effort to light the stump of his cigar.

"I think so too," answered Orsino, realising that since he had acquired the property it would be as well to know how it looked. "You see I have trusted my adviser entirely in the matter, and I am ashamed to say I do not know where the house is."

Andrea Contini looked at him curiously.

"This is the first time that you have had anything to do with business of this kind, Signor Principe," he observed. "You have fallen into good hands."

"Yours?" inquired Orsino, a little stiffly.

"No. I mean that Count del Ferice is a good adviser in this matter."

"I hope so."

"I am sure of it," said Contini with conviction. "It would be a great surprise to me if we failed to make a handsome profit by this contract."

"There is luck and ill luck in everything," answered Orsino, signalling to a passing cab.

The two men exchanged few words as they drove up to the new quarter

in the direction indicated to the driver by Contini. The cab entered a sort of broad lane, the sketch of a future street, rough with the unrolled metalting of broken stones, the space set apart for the pavement being an uneven path of trodden brown earth. Here and there tall detached houses rose out of the wilderness, mostly covered by scaffoldings and swarming with workmen, but hideous where so far finished as to be visible in all the isolation of their six-storied nakedness. A strong smell of lime, wet earth, and damp masonry was blown into Orsino's nostrils by the scirocco wind. Contini stopped the cab before an unpromising and deserted erection of poles, boards, and tattered matting.

"This is our house," he said, getting out and immediately making another attempt to light his cigar.

"May I offer you a cigarette?" asked Orsino, holding out his case.

Contini touched his hat, bowed a little awkwardly, and took one of the cigarettes, which he immediately transferred to his coat-pocket.

"If you will allow me I will smoke it by and by," he said. "I have not finished my cigar."

Orsino stood on the slippery ground beside the stones and contemplated his purchase. All at once his heart sank and he felt a profound disgust for everything within the range of his vision. He was suddenly aware of his own total and hopeless ignorance of everything connected with building, theoretical or practical. The sight of the stiff angular scaffoldings, draped with torn straw mattings that flapped fantastically in the south-east wind, the apparent absence of anything like a real house behind them, the blades of grass sprouting abundantly about the foot of each pole and covering the heaps of brown *pozzolana* earth prepared for making mortar, even the detail of a broken wooden hod before the boarded entrance,—all these things contributed at once to increase his dismay and to fill him with a bitter sense of inevitable failure. He found

nothing to say, as he stood with his hands in his pockets staring at the general desolation, but he understood for the first time why women cry for disappointment. And, moreover, this desolation was his own peculiar property, by deed of purchase, and he could not get rid of it.

Meanwhile Andrea Contini stood beside him, examining the scaffoldings with his bright brown eyes, in no way disconcerted by the prospect.

"Shall we go in?" he asked at last.

"Do unfinished houses always look like this?" inquired Orsino, in a hopeless tone, without noticing his companion's proposition.

"Not always," answered Contini cheerfully. "It depends upon the amount of work that has been done, and upon other things. Sometimes the foundations sink and the buildings collapse."

"Are you sure nothing of the kind has happened here?" asked Orsino with increasing anxiety.

"I have been several times to look at it since the baker died and I have not noticed any cracks yet," answered the architect, whose coolness seemed almost exasperating.

"I suppose you understand these things, Signor Contini?"

Contini laughed, and felt in his pockets for a crumpled paper box of wax-lights.

"It is my profession," he answered. "And then, I built this house from the foundations. If you will come in, Signor Principe, I will show you how solidly the work is done."

He took a key from his pocket and thrust it into a hole in the boarding, which latter proved to be a rough door and opened noisily upon rusty hinges. Orsino followed him in silence. To the young man's inexperienced eye the interior of the building was even more depressing than the outside. It smelt like a vault, and a dim gray light entered the square apertures from the curtained scaffoldings without, just sufficient to help one to find a way

through the heaps of rubbish that covered the unpaved floors. Contini explained rapidly and concisely the arrangement of the rooms, calling one cave familiarly a dining-room and another a "conjugal bedroom," as he expressed it, and expatiating upon the facilities of communication which he himself had carefully planned. Orsino listened in silence and followed his guide patiently from place to place, in and out of dark passages and up flights of stairs as yet unguarded by any rail, until they emerged upon a sort of flat terrace intersected by low walls, which was indeed another floor, and above which another story and a garret were yet to be built to complete the house. Orsino looked gloomily about him, lighted a cigarette and sat down upon a bit of masonry.

"To me, it looks very like failure," he remarked. "But I suppose there is something in it."

"It will not look like failure next month," said Contini carelessly. "Another story is soon built, and then the attic, and then, if you like, a Gothic roof and a turret at one corner. That always attracts buyers first and respectable lodgers afterwards."

"Let us have a turret, by all means," answered Orsino, as though his tailor had proposed to put an extra button on the cuff of his coat. "But how in the world are you going to begin? Everything looks to me as though it were falling to pieces."

"Leave all that to me, Signor Principe. We will begin to-morrow. I have a good overseer and there are plenty of workmen to be had. We have material for a week at least, and paid for, excepting a few cartloads of lime. Come again in ten days and you will see something worth looking at."

"In ten days? And what am I to do in the meantime?" asked Orsino, who fancied that he had found an occupation.

Andrea Contini looked at him in some surprise, not understanding in the least what he meant.

"I mean, am I to have nothing to do with the work?" asked Orsino.

"Oh,—as far as that goes, you will come every day, Signor Principe, if it amuses you, though as you are not a practical architect, your assistance is not needed until questions of taste have to be considered, such as the Gothic roof for instance. But there are the accounts to be kept, of course, and there is the business with the bank from week to week, office work of various kinds. That becomes naturally your department, as the practical superintendence of the building is mine, but you will of course leave it to the steward of the Signor Principe di Sant' Illario, who is a man of affairs."

"I will do nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Orsino. "I will do it myself. I will learn how it is done. I want occupation."

"What an extraordinary wish!" Andrea Contini opened his eyes in real astonishment.

"Is it? You work. Why should not I?"

"I must, and you need not, Signor Principe," observed the architect. "But if you insist, then you had better get a clerk to explain the details to you at first."

"Do you not understand them? Can you not teach me?" asked Orsino, displeased with the idea of employing a third person.

"Oh yes, I have been a clerk myself. I should be too much honoured, but,—the fact is, my spare time—"

He hesitated and seemed reluctant to explain.

"What do you do with your spare time?" asked Orsino, suspecting some love affair.

"The fact is, I play a second violin at one of the theatres, and I give lessons on the mandoline, and sometimes I do copying work for my uncle who is a clerk in the Treasury. You see he is old, and his eyes are not as good as they were."

Orsino began to think that his

partner was a very odd person. He could not help smiling at the enumeration of his architect's secondary occupations.

"You are very fond of music, then?" he asked.

"Eh—yes—as one can be without talent,—a little by necessity. To be an architect one must have houses to build. You see the baker died unexpectedly. One must live somehow."

"And could you not,—how shall I say? Would you not be willing to give me lessons in book-keeping instead of teaching some one else to play the mandoline?"

"You would not care to learn the mandoline yourself, Signor Principe? It is a very pretty instrument, especially for country parties, as well as for serenading."

Orsino laughed. He did not see himself in the character of a mandolinist.

"I have not the slightest ear for music," he answered. "I would much rather learn something about business."

"It is less amusing," said Andrea Contini regretfully. "But I am at your service. I will come to the office when work is over and we will do the accounts together. You will learn in that way very quickly."

"Thank you. I suppose we must have an office. It is necessary, is it not?"

"Indispensable; a room, a garret—anything. A habitation, a legal domicile, so to say."

"Where do you live, Signor Contini? Would not your lodging do?"

"I am afraid not, Signor Principe. At least not for the present. I am not very well lodged and the stairs are badly lighted."

"Why not here, then?" asked Orsino, suddenly growing desperately practical, for he felt unaccountably reluctant to hire an office in the city.

"We should pay no rent," said Contini. "It is an idea. But the walls are dry down stairs, and we only



need a pavement, and plastering, and doors and windows, and papering and some furniture to make one of the rooms quite habitable. It is an idea, undoubtedly. Besides, it would give the house an air of being inhabited, which is valuable."

"How long will all that take? A month or two?"

"About a week. It will be a little fresh, but if you are not rheumatic, Signor Principe, we can try it."

"I am not rheumatic," laughed Orsino, who was pleased with the idea of having his office on the spot, and apparently in the midst of a wilderness. "And I suppose you really do understand architecture, Signor Contini, though you do play the fiddle."

In this exceedingly sketchy way was the firm of Andrea Contini and Company established and lodged, being at the time in a very shadowy state, theoretically and practically, though it was destined to play a more prominent part in affairs than either of the young partners anticipated. Orsino discovered before long that his partner was a man of skill and energy, and his spirits rose by degrees as the work began to advance. Contini was restless, untiring, and gifted, such a character as Orsino had not yet met in his limited experience of the world. The man seemed to understand his business to the smallest details and could show the workmen how to mix mortar in the right proportions, or how to strengthen a scaffolding at the weak point much better than the overseer or the master-builder. At the books he seemed to be infallible, and he possessed, moreover, such a power of stating things clearly and neatly that Orsino actually learnt from him in a few weeks what he would have needed six months to learn anywhere else. So soon as the first dread of failure wore off, Orsino discovered that he was happier than he had ever been in the course of his life before. What he did was not, indeed, of much use in the progress of the office work and rather hindered

than helped Contini, who was obliged to do everything slowly and sometimes twice over in order to make his pupil understand; but Orsino had a clear and practical mind, and did not forget what he had learned once. An odd sort of friendship sprang up between the two men, who in ordinary circumstances would never have met, or known each other by sight. The one had expected to find in his partner an overbearing ignorant patrician; the other had supposed that his companion would turn out a vulgar, sordid, half-educated builder. Both were equally surprised when each discovered the truth about the other.

Though Orsino was reticent by nature, he took no especial pains to conceal his goings and comings, but as his occupation took him out of the ordinary beat followed by his idle friends, it was a long time before any of them discovered that he was engaged in practical business. In his own home he was not questioned, and he said nothing. The Saracinesca were considered eccentric, but no one interfered with them nor ventured to offer them suggestions. If they chose to allow their heir absolute liberty of action, merely because he had passed his twenty-first birthday, it was their own concern, and his ruin would be upon their own heads. No one cared to risk a savage retort from the aged prince, or a cutting answer from Sant' Ilario, for the questionable satisfaction of telling either that Orsino was going to the bad. The only person who really knew what Orsino was about, and who could have claimed the right to speak to his family of his doings, was San Giacinto, and he held his peace, having plenty of important affairs of his own to occupy him and being blessed with an especial gift for leaving other people to themselves.

Sant' Ilario never spied upon his son, as many of his contemporaries would have done in his place. He preferred to trust him to his own devices so long as these led to no great mischief. He saw that Orsino was

less restless than formerly, that he was less at the club, and that he was stirring earlier in the morning than had been his wont, and he was well satisfied.

It was not to be expected, however, that Orsino should take Maria Consuelo literally at her word, and cease from visiting her all at once. If not really in love with her, he was at least so much interested in her that he sorely missed the daily half hour or more which he had been used to spend in her society.

Three several times he went to her hotel at the accustomed hour, and each time he was told by the porter that she was at home; but on each occasion, also, when he sent up his card, the hotel servant returned with a message from the maid to the effect that Madame d'Aranjuez was tired and did not receive. Orsino's pride rebelled equally against making a further attempt and against writing a letter requesting an explanation. Once only, when he was walking alone she passed him in a carriage, and she acknowledged his bow quietly and naturally, as though nothing had happened. He fancied she was paler than usual, and that there were shadows under her eyes which he had not formerly noticed. Possibly, he thought, she was really not in good health, and the excuses made through her maid were not wholly invented. He was conscious that his heart beat a little faster as he watched the back of the brougham disappearing in the distance, but he did not feel an irresistible longing to make another and more serious attempt to see her. He tried to analyse his own sensations, and it seemed to him that he rather dreaded a meeting than desired it, and that he felt a certain humiliation for which he could not account. In the midst of his analysis, his cigarette went out and he sighed. He was startled by such an expression of feeling, and tried to remember whether he had ever sighed before in his life, but if he had, he could not recall the

circumstances. He tried to console himself with the absurd supposition that he was sleepy and that the long-drawn breath had been only a suppressed yawn. Then he walked on, gazing before him into the purple haze that filled the deep street just as the sun was setting, and a vague sadness and longing touched him which had no place in his catalogue of permissible emotions, and which were as far removed from the cold cynicism which he admired in others and affected in himself as they were beyond the sphere of his analysis.

There is an age, not always to be fixed exactly, at which the really masculine nature craves the society of womankind, in one shape or another, as a necessity of existence, and by the society of womankind no one means merely the daily and hourly social intercourse which consists in exchanging the same set of remarks half a dozen times a day with as many beings of gentle sex who, to the careless eye of ordinary man, differ from each other in dress rather than in face or thought. There are eminently manly men, that is to say men fearless, strong, honourable and active, to whom the common five o'clock tea presents as much distraction and offers as much womanly sympathy as they need; who choose their intimate friends among men, rather than among women, and who die at an advanced age without ever having been more than comfortably in love,—and of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. The masculine man may be as brave, as strong, and as scrupulously just in all his dealings; but on the other hand he may be weak, cowardly, and a cheat, and he is apt to inherit the portion of sinners, whatever his moral characteristics may be, good or bad.

Orsino was certainly not unmanly, but he was also eminently masculine, and he began to suffer from the loss of Maria Consuelo's conversation in a way that surprised himself. His acquaintance with her, to give it a mild name, had been the first of the kind

which he had enjoyed, and it contrasted too strongly with the crude experiences of his untried youth not to be highly valued by him and deeply regretted. He might pretend to laugh at it, and repeat to himself that his Egeria had been but a very superficial person, fervent in the reading of the daily novel and possibly not even worldly wise; he did not miss her any the less for that. A little sympathy and much patience in listening will go far to make a woman of small gifts indispensable even to a man of superior talent, especially when he thinks himself misunderstood in his ordinary surroundings. The sympathy passes for intelligence and the patience for assent and encouragement; a touch of the hand, and there is friendship, a tear, a sigh, and devotion stands upon the stage, bearing in her arms an infant love who learns to walk his part at the first suspicion of a kiss.

Orsino did not imagine that he had exhausted the world's capabilities of happiness. The age of Byronism, as it used to be called, is over. Possibly tragedies are more real and frequent in our day than when the century was young; at all events those which take place seem to draw a new element of horror from those undefinable, mechanical, prosaic, pseudo-scientific conditions which make our lives so different from those of our fathers. Everything is terribly sudden nowadays, and alarmingly quick. Lovers make love across Europe by telegraph, and poetic justice arrives in less than forty-eight hours by the Oriental Express. Divorce is our weapon of precision, and every pack of cards at the gaming-table can distil a poison more destructive than that of the Borgia. The unities of time and place are preserved by wire and rail in a way which would have delighted the hearts of the old French tragedies. Perhaps men seek dramatic situations in their own lives less readily since they have found out means of making the concluding act more swift, sudden, and inevitable. At all events we all like tragedy less and

comedy more than our fathers did, which, I think, shows that we are sadder and possibly wiser men than they.

However this may be, Orsino was no more inclined to fancy himself unhappy than any of his familiar companions, though he was quite willing to believe that he understood most of life's problems, and especially the heart of woman. He continued to go into the world, for it was new to him, and if he did not find exactly the sort of sympathy he secretly craved, he found at least a great deal of consideration, some flattery, and a certain amount of amusement. But when he was not actually being amused, or really engaged in the work which he had undertaken with so much enthusiasm, he felt lonely and missed Maria Consuelo more than ever. By this time she had taken a position in society from which there could be no drawing back, and he gave up for ever the hope of seeing her in his own circle. She seemed to avoid even the Gray houses where they might have met on neutral ground, and Orsino saw that his only chance of finding her in the world lay in going frequently and openly to Del Ferice's house. He had called on Donna Tullia after the dinner of course, but he was not prepared to do more, and Del Ferice did not seem to expect it.

Three or four weeks after he had entered into partnership with Andrea Contini, Orsino found himself alone with his mother in the evening. Corona was seated near the fire in her favourite boudoir, with a book in her hand, and Orsino stood warming himself on one side of the chimney-piece, staring into the flames and occasionally glancing at his mother's calm, dark face. He was debating whether he should stay at home or not.

Corona became conscious that he looked at her from time to time and dropped her novel upon her knee.

"Are you going out, Orsino?" she asked.

"I hardly know," he answered.

"There is nothing particular to do, and it is too late for the theatre."

"Then stay with me. Let us talk." She looked at him affectionately and pointed to a low chair near her.

He drew it up until he could see her face as she spoke, and then sat down.

"What shall we talk about, mother?" he asked, with a smile.

"About yourself, if you like, my dear. That is, if you have anything that you know I would like to hear. I am not curious, am I, Orsino? I never ask you questions about yourself."

"No, indeed. You never tease me with questions, nor does my father either, for that matter. Would you really like to know what I am doing?"

"If you will tell me."

"I am building a house," said Orsino, looking at her to see the effect of the announcement.

"A house?" repeated Corona in surprise. "Where? Does your father know about it?"

"He said he did not care what I did." Orsino spoke rather bitterly.

"That does not sound like him, my dear. Tell me all about it. Have you quarrelled with him, or had words together?"

Orsino told his story quickly, concisely, and with a frankness he would perhaps not have shown to any one else in the world, for he did not even conceal his connection with Del Ferice. Corona listened intently, and her deep eyes told him plainly enough that she was interested. On his part he found an unexpected pleasure in telling her the tale, and he wondered why it had never struck him that his mother might sympathise with his plans and aspirations. When he had finished, he waited for her first word almost as anxiously as he would have waited for an expression of opinion from Maria Consuelo.

Corona did not speak at once. She looked into his eyes, smiled, patted his lean brown hand lovingly and smiled again before she spoke.

"I like it," she said at last. "I like you to be independent and determined. You might perhaps have chosen a better man than Del Ferice for your adviser. He did something once—well, never mind! It was long ago and it did us no harm."

"What did he do, mother? I know my father wounded him in a duel before you were married——"

"It was not that. I would rather not tell you about it; it can do no good, and after all, it has nothing to do with the present affair. He would not be so foolish as to do you an injury now. I know him very well. He is far too clever for that."

"He is certainly clever," said Orsino. He knew that it would be quite useless to question his mother further after what she had said. "I am glad that you do not think I have made a mistake in going into this business."

"No. I do not think you have made a mistake, and I do not believe that your father will think so either when he knows all about it."

"He need not have been so icily discouraging," observed Orsino.

"He is a man, my dear, and I am a woman. That is the difference. Was San Giacinto more encouraging than he? No. They think alike, and San Giacinto has an immense experience besides. And yet they are both wrong. You may succeed, or you may fail; I hope you will succeed, but I do not care much for the result. It is the principle I like, the idea, the independence of the thing. As I grow old, I think more than I used to do when I was young."

"How can you talk of growing old!" exclaimed Orsino indignantly.

"I think more," said Corona again, not heeding him. "One of my thoughts is that our old restricted life was a mistake for us, and that to keep it up would be a sin for you. The world used to stand still in those days, and we stood at the head of it, or thought we did. But it is moving now and you must move with it or you will

not only have to give up your place, but you will be left behind altogether."

"I had no idea that you were so modern, dearest mother," laughed Orsino. He felt suddenly very happy and in the best of humours with himself.

"Modern! No, I do not think that either your father or I could ever be that. If you had lived our lives you would see how impossible it is. The most I can hope to do is to understand you and your brothers as you grow up to be men. But I hate interference and I hate curiosity; the one breeds opposition and the other dishonesty; and if the other boys turn out to be as reticent as you, Orsino, I shall not always know when they want me. You do not realise how much you have been away from me since you were a boy, nor how silent you have grown when you are at home."

"Am I, mother? I never meant to be."

"I know it, dear, and I do not want you to be always confiding in me. It is not a good thing for a young man. You are strong, and the more you rely upon yourself the stronger you will grow. But when you want sympathy, if you ever do, remember that I have my whole heart full of it for you. For that, at least, come to me. No one can give you what I can give you, dear son."

Orsino was touched and pressed her hand, kissing it more than once. He did not know whether in her last words she had meant any allusion to Maria Consuelo, or whether, indeed, she had been aware of his intimacy with the latter. But he did not ask the question of her nor of himself. For the moment he felt that a want in his nature had been satisfied, and he wondered again why he had never thought of confiding in his mother.

They talked of his plans until it was late, and from that time they were more often together than before, each growing daily more proud of the other, though perhaps Orsino had better reasons for his pride than Corona

could have found, for the love of mother for son is more comprehensive and not less blind than the passion of woman for man.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

THE short Roman season was advancing rapidly to its premature fall, which is on Ash Wednesday, after which it struggles to hold up its head against the overwhelming odds of a severely observed Lent, to revive only spasmodically after Easter and to die a natural death on the first warm day. In that year, too, the fatal day fell on the fifteenth of February, and progressive spirits talked of the possibility of fixing the movable Feasts and Fasts of the Church in a more convenient part of the calendar. Easter might be made to fall in June, for instance, and society need not be informed of its inevitable and impending return to dust and ashes until it had enjoyed a good three months, or even four, of what an eminent American defines as "brass, sass, lies and sin."

Rome was very gay that year, to compensate for the shortness of its playtime. Everything was successful, and every one was rich. People talked of millions less soberly than they had talked of thousands a few years earlier, and with less respect than they mentioned hundreds twelve months later. Like the vanity-struck frog, the *franc* blew itself up to the bursting-point, in the hope of being taken for the *louis*, and momentarily succeeded, even beyond its own expectations. No one walked, though horse-flesh was enormously dear, and a good coachman's wages amounted to just twice the salary of a government-clerk. Men who, six months earlier, had climbed ladders with loads of brick or mortar, were now transformed into flourishing sub-contractors, and drove about in smart pony-carts, looking the picture of Italian prosperity, rejoicing in the most flashy of ties, and smoking the



blackest and longest of long black cigars. During twenty hours out of the twenty-four the gates of the city roared with traffic. From all parts of the country labourers poured in, bundle in hand and tools on shoulder, to join in the enormous work and earn their share of the pay that was distributed so liberally. A certain man who believed in himself stood up and said that Rome was becoming one of the greatest of cities, and he smacked his lips and said that he had done it, and that the Triple Alliance was a goose which would lay many golden eggs. The believing bulls roared everything away before them, opposition, objections, financial experience, and the vanquished bears hibernated in secret places, sucking their paws and wondering what, in the name of Ursa Major and Ursa Minor, would happen next. Distinguished men wrote pamphlets in the most distinguished language to prove that wealth was a baby capable of being hatched artificially and brought up by hand. Every unmarried swain who could find a bride, married her forthwith; those who could not followed the advice of an illustrious poet and, being over-anxious to take wives, took those of others. Everybody was decorated. It positively rained decorations and hailed grand crosses, and enough commanders' ribbons were reeled out to have hanged half the population. The periodical attempt to revive the defunct carnival in the Corso was made, and the yet unburied corpse of ancient gaiety was taken out and painted, and gorgeously arrayed, and propped up in its seat to be a posthumous terror to its enemies, like the dead Cid. Society danced frantically and did all those things which it ought not to have done, and added a few more, unconsciously imitating Pico della Mirandola.

Even those comparatively few families who, like the Saracinesca, had scornfully declined to dabble in the whirlpool of affairs, did not by any means refuse to dance to the music of

success which filled the city with such enchanting strains. The Princess Befana rose from her death-bed with more than usual vivacity and went to the length of opening her palace on two evenings in two successive weeks, to the intense delight of her gay and youthful heirs, who earnestly hoped that the excitement might kill her at last, and kill her beyond resurrection this time. But they were disappointed. She still dies periodically in winter and blooms out again in spring with the poppies, affording a perpetual and edifying illustration of the changes of the year, or, as some say, of the doctrine of immortality. On one of those memorable occasions she walked through a quadrille with the aged Prince Saracinesca, whereupon Sant' Ilario slipped his arm round Corona's waist and waltzed with her down the whole length of the ballroom and back again amidst the applause of his contemporaries and their children. If Orsino had had a wife he would have followed their example. As it was, he looked rather gloomily in the direction of a silent and high-born damsel with whom he was condemned to dance the ctillon at a later hour.

So all went gaily on until Ash Wednesday extinguished the social flame, suddenly and beyond relighting. And still Orsino did not meet Maria Consuelo, and still he hesitated to make another attempt to find her at home. He began to wonder whether he should ever see her again, and as the days went by he almost wished that Donna Tullia would send him a card for her Lenten evenings, at which Maria Consuelo regularly assisted, as he learned from the papers. After that first invitation to dinner, he had expected that Del Ferice's wife would make an attempt to draw him into her circle; and, indeed, she would probably have done so had she followed her own instinct instead of submitting to the higher policy dictated by her husband. Orsino waited in vain, not knowing whether to be annoyed at the lack of consideration bestowed upon him, or



to admire the tact which assumed that he would never wish to enter the Del Ferice circle.

It is presumably clear that Orsino was not in love with Madame d'Aranjuez, and he himself appreciated the fact with a sense of disappointment. He was amazed at his own coldness, and at the indifference with which he had submitted to what amounted to a most abrupt dismissal. He even went so far as to believe that Maria Consuelo had repulsed him designedly in the hope of kindling a more sincere passion. In that case she had been egregiously mistaken, he thought. He felt a curiosity to see her again before she left Rome, but it was nothing more than that. A new and absorbing interest had taken possession of him which at first left little room in his nature for anything else. His days were spent in the laborious study of figures and plans, broken only by occasional short but amusing conversations with Andrea Contini. His evenings were generally passed among a set of people who did not know Maria Consuelo except by sight and who had long ceased to ask him questions about her. Of late, too, he had missed his daily visits to her less and less, until he hardly regretted them at all, nor so much as thought of the possibility of renewing them. He laughed at the idea that his mother should have taken the place of a woman whom he had begun to love, and yet he was conscious that it was so, though he asked himself how long such a condition of things could last. Corona was far too wise to discuss his affairs with his father. He was too like herself for her to misunderstand him, and if she regarded the whole matter as perfectly harmless and as a legitimate subject for general conversation, she yet understood perfectly that having been once rebuffed by Sant' Ilario, Orsino must wish to be fully successful in his attempt before mentioning it again to the latter. And she felt so strongly in sympathy with her son that his work gradually

acquired an intense interest for her, and she would have sacrificed much rather than see it fail. She did not on that account blame Giovanni for his discouraging view when Orsino had consulted him. Giovanni was the passion of her life and was not fallible in his impulses, though his judgment might sometimes be at fault in technical matters for which he cared nothing. But her love for her son was as great and sincere in its own way, and her pride in him was such as to make his success a condition of her future happiness.

Corona had assuredly little reason to complain of her lot during the past twenty years, but unruffled and perfect as it had seemed to her she began to see that there were sources of sorrow and satisfaction before her which had not yet poured their bitter or sweet streams into the stately river of her mature life. The new interest which Orsino had created for her became more and more absorbing, and she watched it and tended it, and longed to see it grow to greater proportions. The situation was strange in one way at least. Orsino was working and his mother was helping him to work in the hope of a financial success which neither of them wanted or cared for. Possibly the certainty that failure could entail no serious consequences made the game a more amusing if a less exciting one to play.

"If I lose," said Orsino to her, "I can only lose the few thousands I invested. If I win, I will give you a string of pearls as a keepsake."

"If you lose, dear boy," answered Corona, "it must be because you had not enough to begin with. I will give you as much as you need, and we will try again."

They laughed happily together. Whatever chanced, things must turn out well. Orsino worked very hard, and Corona was very rich in her own right and could afford to help to any extent she thought necessary. She could, indeed, have taken the part of the bank and advanced him all the money he

needed, but it seemed useless to interfere with the existing arrangements.

In Lent the house had reached an important point in its existence. Andrea Contini had completed the Gothic roof and the turret which appeared to him in the first vision of his dream, but to which the defunct baker had made objections on the score of expense. The masons were almost all gone and another set of workmen were busy with finer tools moulding cornices and laying on the snow-white stucco. Within, the joiners and carpenters kept up a ceaseless hammering.

One day Andrea Contini walked into the office after a tour of inspection, with a whole cigar, unlighted and intact, between his teeth. Orsino was well aware from this circumstance that something unusually fortunate had happened or was about to happen, and he rose from his books, as soon as he recognised the fair-weather signal.

"We can sell the house whenever we like," said the architect, his bright brown eyes sparkling with satisfaction.

"Already!" exclaimed Orsino who, though equally delighted at the prospect of such speedy success, regretted in his heart the damp walls and the constant stir of work which he had learned to like so well.

"Already—yes. One needs luck like ours! The count has sent a man up in a cab to say that an acquaintance of his will come and look at the building to-day between twelve and one with a view to buying. The sooner we look out for some fresh undertaking, the better. What do you say, Don Orsino?"

"It is all your doing, Contini. Without you I should still be standing outside and watching the mattings flapping in the wind, as I did on that never-to-be-forgotten first day."

"I conceive that a house cannot be built without an architect," answered Contini laughing, "and it has always been plain to me that there can be no architects without houses to build. But as for any especial credit to me, I

refute the charge indignantly. I except the matter of the turret, which is evidently what has attracted the buyer. I always thought it would. You would never have thought of a turret, would you, Don Orsino?"

"Certainly not, nor of many other things," answered Orsino, laughing. "But I am sorry to leave the place. I have grown into liking it."

"What can one do? It is the way of the world—'*lieto ricordo d'un amor che fù*,'" sang Contini in the thin but expressive falsetto which seems to be the natural inheritance of men who play upon stringed instruments. He broke off in the middle of a bar and laughed, out of sheer delight at his own good fortune.

In due time the purchaser came, saw, and actually bought. He was a problematic personage with a disquieting nose, who spoke few words but examined everything with an air of superior comprehension. He looked keenly at Orsino but seemed to have no idea who he was and put all his questions to Contini.

After agreeing to the purchase he inquired whether Andrea Contini and Company had any other houses of the same description building, and if so where they were situated, adding that he liked the firm's way of doing things. He stipulated for one or two slight improvements, made an appointment for a meeting with the notaries on the following day, and went off with a rather unceremonious nod to the partners. The name he left was that of a well-known capitalist from the south, and Contini was inclined to think he had seen him before, but was not certain.

Within a week the business was concluded, the buyer took over the mortgage as Orsino and Contini had done and paid the difference in cash into the bank, which deducted the amounts due on notes of hand before handing the remainder to the two young men. The buyer also kept back a small part of the purchase-money to be paid on taking possession, when the

house was to be entirely finished. Andrea Contini and Company had realised a considerable sum of money.

"The question is, what to do next?" said Orsino thoughtfully.

"We had better look about us for something promising," said his partner. "A corner lot in this same quarter. Corner houses are more interesting to build and people like them to live in because they can see two or three ways at once. Besides, a corner is always a good place for a turret. Let us take a walk; smoking and strolling we shall find something."

"A year ago, no doubt," answered Orsino, who was becoming worldly wise. "A year ago that would have been well enough. But listen to me. That house opposite to ours has been finished some time, yet nobody has bought it. What is the reason?"

"It faces north and not south, as ours does, and it has not a Gothic roof."

"My dear Contini, I do not mean to say that the Gothic roof has not helped us very much, but it cannot have helped us alone. How about those two houses together at the end of the next block? Balconies, travertine columns, superior doors and windows, spaces for hydraulic lifts and all the rest of it. Yet no one buys. Dry, too, and almost ready to live in, and all the joinery of pitch pine. There is a reason for their ill luck."

"What do you think it is?" asked Contini, opening his eyes.

"The land on which they are built was not in the hands of Del Ferice's bank, and the money that built them was not advanced by Del Ferice's bank, and Del Ferice's bank has no interest in selling the houses themselves. Therefore they are not sold."

"But surely there are other banks in Rome, and private individuals——"

"No, I do not believe that there are," said Orsino with conviction. "My cousin of San Giacinto thinks that the selling days are over, and I fancy he is right, except about Del Ferice, who is cleverer than any of us. We had

better not deceive ourselves, Contini. Del Ferice sold our house for us, and unless we keep with him we shall not sell another so easily. His bank has a lot of half-finished houses on its hands secured by mortgages which are worthless until the houses are habitable. Del Ferice wants us to finish those houses for him, in order to recover their value. If we do it, we shall make a profit. If we attempt anything on our own account we shall fail. Am I right or not?"

"What can I say? At all events you are on the safe side. But why has not the count given all this work to some old-established firm of his acquaintance?"

"Because he cannot trust any one as he can trust us, and he knows it."

"Of course I owe the count a great deal for his kindness in introducing me to you. He knew all about me before the baker died, and afterwards I waited for him outside the Chambers one evening and asked him if he could find anything for me to do, but he did not give me much encouragement. I saw you speak to him and get into his carriage—was it not you?"

"Yes, it was I," answered Orsino, remembering the tall man in an overcoat who had disappeared in the dusk on the evening when he himself had first sought Del Ferice. "Yes, and you see we are both under a sort of obligation to him which is another reason for taking his advice."

"Obligations are humiliating," exclaimed Contini impatiently. "We have succeeded in increasing our capital,—your capital, Don Orsino—let us strike out for ourselves."

"I think my reasons are good," said Orsino quietly. "And as for obligations, let us remember that we are men of business."

It appears from this that the low-born Andrea Contini and the high and mighty Don Orsino Saracinesca were not very far from exchanging places so far as prejudice was concerned. Contini noticed the fact and smiled.

"After all," he said, "if you can

accept the situation, I ought to accept it too."

"It is a matter of business," said Orsino, returning to his argument. "There is no such thing as obligation where money is borrowed on good security and a large interest is regularly paid."

It was clear that Orsino was developing commercial instincts. His grandfather would have died of rage on the spot if he could have listened to the young fellow's cool utterances. But Contini was not pleased and would not abandon his position so easily.

"It is very well for you, Don Orsino," he said, vainly attempting to light his cigar. "You do not need the money as I do. You take it from Del Ferice because it amuses you to do so, not because you are obliged to accept it. That is the difference. The count knows it too, and knows that he is not conferring a favour but receiving one. You do him an honour in borrowing his money. He lays me under an obligation in lending it."

"We must get money somewhere," answered Orsino with indifference. "If not from Del Ferice, then from some other bank. And as for obligations, as you call them, he is not the bank himself, and the bank does not lend its money in order to amuse me or to humiliate you, my friend. But if you insist, I shall say that the convenience is not on one side only. If Del Ferice supports us it is because we serve his interests. If he has done us a good turn, it is a reason why we should do him one, and build his houses rather than those of other people. You talk about my conferring a favour upon him. Where will he find another Andrea Contini and Company to make worthless property valuable for him? In that sense you and I are earning his gratitude, by the simple process of being scrupulously honest. I do not feel in the least humiliated, I assure you."

"I cannot help it," replied Contini, biting his cigar savagely. "I have a

heart, and it beats with good blood. Do you know that there is blood of Cola di Rienzi in my veins?"

"No. You never told me," answered Orsino, one of whose forefathers had been concerned in the murder of the Tribune, a fact to which he thought it best not to refer at the present moment.

"And the blood of Cola di Rienzi burns under the shame of an obligation!" cried Contini, with a heat hardly warranted by the circumstances. "It is humiliating, it is base, to submit to be the tool of a Del Ferice; we all know who and what Del Ferice was, and how he came by his title of count, and how he got his fortune,—a spy, an intriguer! In a good cause? Perhaps. I was not born then, nor you either, Signor Principe, and we do not know what the world was like when it was quite another world. That is not a reason for serving a spy!"

"Calm yourself, my friend. We are not in Del Ferice's service."

"Better to die than that! Better to kill him at once and go to the galleys for a few years! Better to play the fiddle, or pick rags, or beg in the streets than that, Signor Principe. One must respect one's self. You see it yourself. One must be a man, and feel as a man. One must feel those things here, Signor Principe, here in the heart!"

Contini struck his breast with his clenched fist and bit the end of his cigar quite through in his anger. Then he suddenly seized his hat and rushed out of the room.

Orsino was less surprised at the outburst than might have been expected, and did not attach any great weight to his partner's dramatic rage. But he lit a cigarette and carefully thought over the situation, trying to find out whether there were really any ground for Contini's first remarks. He was perfectly well aware that as Orsino Saracinesca he would cut his own throat with enthusiasm rather than borrow a louis of Ugo Del Ferice. But as Andrea Contini and Company he was another person, and so Del Ferice was not

Count Del Ferice, nor the Onorevole Del Ferice, but simply a director in a bank with which he had business. If the interests of Andrea Contini and Company were identical with those of the bank, there was no reason whatever for interrupting relations both amicable and profitable, merely because one member of the firm claimed to be descended from Cola di Rienzi, a defunct personage in whom Orsino felt no interest whatever. Andrea Contini, considering his social relations, might be on terms of friendship with his hatter, for instance, or might have personal reasons for disliking him. In neither case could the buying of a hat from that individual be looked upon as an obligation conferred or received by either party. This was quite clear, and Orsino was satisfied.

"Business is business," he said to himself, "and people who introduce personal considerations into a financial transaction will get the worst of the bargain."

Andrea Contini was apparently of the same opinion, for when he entered the room again at the end of an hour his excitement had quite disappeared.

"If we take another contract from the count," he said, "is there any reason why we should not take a larger one, if it is to be had? We could manage three or four buildings now that you have become such a good book-keeper."

"I am quite of your opinion," Orsino answered, deciding at once to make no reference to what had gone before.

"The only question is, whether we have capital enough for a margin."

"Leave that to me."

Orsino determined to consult his mother, in whose judgment he felt a confidence which he could not explain but which was not misplaced. The fact was simple enough. Corona understood him thoroughly, though her comprehension of his business was more than limited, and she did nothing in reality but encourage his own sober opinion when it happened to be at variance with some enthusiastic inclina-

tion which momentarily deluded him. That quiet pushing of a man's own better reason against his half-considered but often headstrong impulses, is after all one of the best and most loving services which a wise woman can render to a man whom she loves, be he husband, son, or brother. Many women have no other secret, and indeed there are few more valuable ones, if well used and well kept. But let not graceless man discover that it is used upon him. He will resent being led by his own reason far more than being made the senseless slave of a foolish woman's wildest caprice. To select the best of himself for his own use is to trample upon his free will. To send him barefoot to Jericho in search of a dried flower is to appeal to his heart. Man is a reasoning animal.

Corona, as was to be expected, was triumphant in Orsino's first success, and spent as much time in talking over the past and the future with him as she could command during his own hours of liberty. He needed no urging to continue in the same course, but he enjoyed her happiness and delighted in her encouragement.

"Contini wishes to take a large contract," he said to her, after the interview last described. "I agree with him, in a way. We could certainly manage a larger business."

"No doubt," Corona answered thoughtfully, for she saw that there was some objection to the scheme in his own mind.

"I have learned a great deal," he continued, "and we have much more capital than we had. Besides I suppose you would lend me a few thousands if we needed them, would you not, mother?"

"Certainly, my dear. You shall not be hampered by want of money."

"And then, it is possible that we might make something like a fortune in a short time. It would be a great satisfaction. But then, too—" He stopped.

"What then?" asked Corona, smiling.

"Things may turn out differently. Though I have been successful this time, I am much more inclined to believe that San Giacinto was right than I was before I began. All this movement does not rest on a solid basis."

A financier of thirty years' standing could not have made the statement more impressively, and Orsino was conscious that he was assuming an elderly tone. He laughed the next moment.

"That is a stock phrase, mother," he continued; "but it means something. Everything is not what it should be. If the demand were as great as people say it is, there would not be half-a-dozen houses, better houses than ours, unsold in our street. That is why I am afraid of a big contract. I might lose all my money and some of yours."

"It would not be of much consequence if you did," answered Corona. "But you will be guided by your own judgment, which is much better than mine. One must risk something, of course, but there is no use in going into danger."

"Nevertheless, I should enjoy a big venture immensely."

"There is no reason why you should not try one, when the moment comes, my dear. I suppose that a few months will decide whether there is to be a crisis or not. In the meantime you might take something moderate, neither so small as the last, nor so large as you would like. You will get more experience, risk less, and be better prepared for a crash if it comes, or to take advantage of anything favourable if business grows safer."

Orsino was silent for a moment. "You are very wise, mother," he said. "I will take your advice."

Corona had indeed acted as wisely as she could. The only flaw in her reasoning was her assertion that a few months would decide the fate of Roman affairs. If it were possible to predict a crisis even within a few months, speculation would be a less precarious business than it is.

Orsino and his mother might have talked longer and perhaps to better purpose, but they were interrupted by the entrance of a servant, bearing a note. Corona instinctively put out her hand to receive it.

"For Don Orsino," said the man, stopping before him.

Orsino took the letter, looked at it and turned it over.

"I think it is from Madame d'Aranjuez," he remarked, without emotion. "May I read it?"

"There is no answer, Eccellenza," said the servant, whose curiosity was satisfied.

"Read it, of course," said Corona, looking at him.

She was surprised that Madame d'Aranjuez should write to him, but she was still more astonished to see the indifference with which he opened the missive. She had imagined that he was more or less in love with Maria Consuelo. "I fancy it is the other way," she thought. "The woman wants to marry him. I might have suspected it."

Orsino read the note, and tossed it into the fire without volunteering any information.

"I will take your advice, mother," he said, continuing the former conversation, as though nothing had happened. But the subject seemed to be exhausted, and before long Orsino made an excuse to his mother and went out.

*(To be continued.)*



## SOME GREAT BIOGRAPHIES.

It is one of the best worn of commonplaces that there is no book so generally interesting as a well done biography, and none which is so rarely well done or so difficult to do well. But there is often a good deal of truth in commonplaces, and there is a very great deal of it in this. Putting aside books read owing to some fashion or fancy of the time, and those which lend themselves to reading simply because they require absolutely no knowledge or intelligence in those who read them, and those in which positive genius insists upon attention being paid to it, no books have been so steadily popular with the best class of readers as the great biographies. On the other hand an undeviating consensus of critics (whose natural depravity could hardly have avoided slipping into truth now and then if their opinion was feigned) agrees that nothing is so bad as the average biography. It may not be unamusing or unprofitable to take some admittedly successful examples and endeavour to see what makes them good; it will certainly not be difficult to discern and indicate in passing what makes the others bad.

All biography is obviously and naturally divided into two kinds. There is the biography pure and simple, in which the whole of the materials is passed through the alembic of the biographer, and in which few if any of these materials appear except in an altered and digested condition. This, though apparently the oldest, is artistically the most perfect kind. Its shortest examples are always its best, and some of the best and shortest are among the best things in literature. The *Agricola* of Tacitus at one end of the list and Southey's *Nelson* almost at the other

may save us the trouble of a long enumeration of the masterpieces; while nobody needs to be told that the list ranges from masterpieces like these down to those that *ego vel Cluvienus* may write. There has always been a considerable demand for this sort of thing; but it is not quite the kind of biography which has been specially popular for the last century, and which has produced the famous books to which I have already alluded. This is the kind of "applied" or "mixed" biography, including letters from and to the hero, anecdotes about him, and the like, connected and wrought into a whole by narrative and comment of the author, or, as he sometimes calls himself, the editor. To this belong more or less wholly the great biographies which I shall take for texts, Boswell's *Johnson*, Moore's *Byron*, Lockhart's *Scott*, Carlyle's *Sterling* (much smaller than the others, for reasons, but distinctly on the same lines with them), and, of books quite recent, Sir George Trevelyan's *Macaulay*. And to this class also, for reasons very easy to understand, belong almost all the biographies recently produced of men recently living. The reasons I say are easy to find. There is the great popularity of the great examples: there is the demand arising from this popularity; but most of all there is the fatal facility of the proceeding in appearance, and in appearance only.

There can of course be no doubt that to the inexperienced it looks easy enough. In the first kind of biography the writer must to some extent master a considerable quantity of matter, and subject it to some kind of intellectual or quasi-intellectual process of his own. At the very worst, the absolutely least, he must

frame a sufficient number of sentences in his own head and (unless he dictates) write them with his own fingers,—a number sufficient to fill the space between the covers of the book. And, unless he is a quite abnormally stupid or conceited man, he will be more or less conscious that he is doing this well or ill, sufficiently or insufficiently. He cannot to any great extent merely extract or quote. He must create, or at any rate build, or do something that may at least cheat himself into the idea that he is building or creating.

The second path is in comparison quite a primrose one. In most cases the biographer by hypothesis finds himself in possession of a certain, often a considerable, stock of material in the way of diaries, letters and what not. Even if he has struck out the notion of the book for himself and is not ready furnished with his materials by executorship, appointment of friends, and the like, his own unskilled labour or that of a few jackals at public and other libraries will generally stock him amply with all the stuff he wants. Very often this stuff is, in part at least, really interesting. What more simple than to calendar it; to omit whatever is more than is wanted to fill the one, two or three volumes ordered or accepted by the publisher; to string the rest together with a "John a Nokes was born on the —th of ——. Of his earliest years we find," and so on; to insert here and there a reference, a reminiscence, a reflection, or a connecting narrative; and, if the operator be very conscientious, to wind up with an appreciation or summary, "We have thus followed a remarkable (or a painful, as the case may be) career to its close. Had this," and so forth. What more simple?

"It is not more stiff than that," says the engaging idiom of the Gaul. At any rate there is certainly a large and apparently an increasing number of persons, many of them educated, presumably not unintelligent, certainly

not unacquainted with books, things, and men, who consider that there is no greater "stiffness" in it. Any competent critic, even any tolerably intelligent reader who dutifully studies or skims his new volumes from Mudie's, could name books of this kind within the last few years, nay, within the last few months, some of which had no justification whatever for their existence; others which a really skilful hand would have reduced to a small volume or even to an ordinary quarterly essay; others which, though capable of having been made into books of the right sort by the right treatment, had only been made into books of the wrong sort by the wrong treatment. Anybody on the other hand who remembers any thoroughly satisfactory book of the kind for some years past must either be a much more fortunate or a much less fastidious reader and critic than I can pretend to be. Let us therefore turn over once more those famous biographies of the kind that are good, and see if the secrets of their goodness are capable of being disengaged.

It will be evident, and may possibly have been already objected by some thorough-going Boswellian, that the first, and as he would say the greatest, has some marked differences from the others. This may be partly due to the fact that Boswell had practically no model when he wrote his extraordinary book, while the others all wrote with that book more or less consciously before them. It may be due also to the other fact that for by far the greater part of his hero's life he did not know him at all; while for the rest he had exceptionally full stores of personal communication to draw upon. A considerable variation of treatment was therefore almost of necessity imposed on him. To generalise about Boswell is a very perilous task. Almost everything possible has been said: and most, or at least many, of these things clash and hurtle like the elements in chaos. I shall give no opinion here whether Boswell was the

pecially-inspired zany of Macaulay, or the man of some foibles but of good brain and heart on the whole, and of an intelligent rather than blind devotion to his master, whom Carlyle preferred and who has been of late years more and more the favourite. I do not myself pretend to rank in the most ardent section of Boswellians. Full of delightful matter as the book is, it seems to me a book rather for perpetual dips,—dips which should leave no part of it unexplored, but interrupted and comparatively short—than for the long steady swim which the very greatest literary streams invite, sustain, and make delightful. It would indeed scarcely be possible for even the most rapid reader to read Boswell or Lockhart or Moore through at a sitting, unless it were as long as the gambling sederunt in *The Young Duke*. But I have read Lockhart often, and I hope to read him often again, on successive evenings from beginning to end. I have read Moore at least once if not twice through in the same way, besides countless dipping into both. I have never succeeded, and I have more than once failed, in reading Boswell through on the same plan.

This however may be my fault, not Boswell's; and I am sure that there is not a page of him that I have not read, and that often, with delight. For he had, and he revealed to the others, the secret of this kind of biography. And he had it, if not so much as Lockhart (who seems to me the prince of all biographers, past, present, and to come), much more than any of those others, though they had it too. This secret consists in fixing the attention of the reader, even if it be unconsciously, at once on the character of the subject; and, so far as possible, never giving a touch afterwards which does not in some way fill out and fill up that character. The satire poured on Boszy's minuteness by Wolcott and others is often (in Wolcott himself at least) admirably good fun, and not always quite

unjust from certain points of view. And yet if we pause and with hand on heart ask ourselves, "Is the most trivial of these trivialities really superfluous?" it will be very difficult to answer in the affirmative. There is hardly one incident, there is hardly one saying of Johnson's, there is even hardly one of those astounding platitudes or sillinesses of Boszy's own which support the "zany" theory, that does not in some subtle and cunning fashion elaborate and furnish forth that extraordinary personality which some will have to be the most faithful portraiture of a human being that we possess in books, and others the most astonishing example of an *eidolon* heightened and transcendentalised by art. I have no doubt that much of Boswell's attraction for the extreme Boswellians consists in what his earliest thoroughgoing defender would have called his "marine-stores" of detail about all sorts of things and persons besides Johnson. No one except Horace Walpole has given us such a collection of *ana in excelsis*, of miscellanies miscellanied into quintessence, as Boswell; and Horace lacks the central tie-beams that Boszy provides. For yet once more it must be said that in Boswell the whole has a tendency and an aim, a tendency which reaches its end, an aim which is hit by the archer. It is in this that the supremacy of Boswell's art consists. Apparently desultory, he is never really so; apparently sucking in everything and disgorging everything by turns with the indiscriminating action of a whirlpool, he is really subjecting the whole to a cunning chemical process.

How different the process, or at least how different the success is in the case of the other, the bad and even the less good biographies the memory, full of fright "of many a double-volumed night", shall easily tell us. In the selection and editing of documents and in the construction of linking narrative we shall find better models among the biographers referred

to than Boswell. But we shall nowhere find a better, I am not quite sure that we shall anywhere find one so good, in this central requirement of always keeping the character of the subject before the reader, and building up the notion of it with here a little and there a little of successive detail and touch. It may be that Boszy had so steeped himself in Johnson that he at last thought and saw all things in Johnson; and that everything extraneous to that subject naturally dropped off and became unimportant to him. But this would be only a scientific, not a critical, explanation of the fact; and the fact itself remains. Now the very last thing that we find in the average modern biographer is this omnipresence of the subject in its quiddity. The biographer may be earnestly, even tediously, desirous to put a certain side, or what he thinks a certain side, of his subject before us. But "the whole," as Empedocles (not Mr. Arnold's but the man himself) said, "few boast to find." We turn over pages of surplusage, pages of repetition, pages of triviality; but the central idea and personality of the man, the idea that disengages itself, once for all and unmistakably, from the pages of Boswell, we are either altogether baffled in seeking, or have to piece and patch out laboriously for ourselves. There may be amusing stories about the subject, or about other people: there may be meritorious bursts of original writing from the author or editor; but the central idea, the central tie-beam, is too often wanting. There is no composition, and therefore there is no art. In Boswell there is this composition, though it is of a very peculiar and perhaps a not easily imitable kind.

The next book in chronological order, Moore's *Byron*, has very different lessons to teach. It must of course be judged in the first place with a most unusual amount of allowance. The mere circumstances of the antecedent destruction of the Memoirs imposed upon Moore such a necessity

of dancing in fetters that probably, if poverty, and perhaps a little vanity combined, had not dictated to will, he never would have consented to undertake the exercise. He wrote too soon after Byron's death not to have been, even if this most harassing condition had been absent, encumbered by innumerable considerations of this person's feelings, of what that person had written, of what the moral British public still thought, of what the enthusiastic British public still felt. Frequent as are Byron's own laudations of Moore's attitude towards "the great," and creditable as on the whole that attitude must be pronounced to have been, Moore suffered under various personal disabilities in grappling with his task. He was an Irishman writing of English society, a somewhat irregularly educated Irishman dealing with English public-school and university education; a Whig writing of a period of almost unbroken Tory domination; a reformed Thomas Little writing of a rather unreformed Don Juan. But he was a man of thorough literary faculty, and literary faculty (which is a branch of wisdom) is, like wisdom, justified of her children in all ways and at all seasons. He had, in those letters and other documents of Byron's which had escaped the flames, illustrative matter of unsurpassed interest; for there is a practical agreement between the admirers and the depreciators of Byron's poetry, that his prose letters are among the very best of their kind. Moore had, moreover, a central subject which, if not in the least enigmatic, was intensely individual, and concerning which the intensest curiosity was entertained by his readers. With a man of the great literary faculty already mentioned this conflict of drawbacks and advantages was certain to produce something notable. The book is indeed full of faults, all of which (with some things which are not faults at all) may be found censured in his most florid style by Wilson in the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*. It

was a mistake, at least as obvious as the reason for it, to be excessively reticent as to the poet's English freaks and unnecessarily loquacious as to his Italian dissipations. It was a worse mistake to drop the pen of the biographer now and then, and thump the cushion of the preacher, an exercise which suited the genial Thomas uncommonly ill. It was a still more unwise extension of that mistake to indulge in abstract discussions about education, marriage, and what not, for which Moore (who was one of the worst hands in the world at abstract dissertation) was very badly equipped, and which, if they had been handled by a combination of Solomon and Berkeley, would still have been out of place in the particular book. It would be quite easy to pick other and lesser faults all through. But who that reads the book with heart's as well as mind's eye cares to do any such thing? Here too we have the main and principal thing, which was in this case to let the subject speak for himself. One of the more legitimate faults which may be found with Moore is that he has not edited quite enough, that he has frequently allowed Byron (who like most letter-writers from foreign parts necessarily had to repeat himself to his various correspondents) to appear in the book as tautologous to a rather unjust extent. But even in this there is justification for the biographer. He knew, being a man of letters and a great man of letters, that what was wanted was precisely this, to let Byron speak for himself. There had been endless speaking *about* him.

God's great gift of speech abused  
Made the memory confused

of almost everybody on the subject. Moore had been prevented from giving full liberty of speech to his client even in this instance; so, as I hold, like a judicious advocate he gave the fullest liberty that he could in the matter left to him. At any rate he too earns the meed due to the thorough

painting of the portrait, the finished construction of the character. We have had all manner of "real Lord Byrons", and of false Lord Byrons, since; we have had things that Moore might have told us had he chosen and been free to speak, and things that he was too sensible to tell however free his tongue had been. But it may be safely said that nothing that can ever come out will be incompatible with the Lord Byron made known to us by Moore. He is done, like Pantagruel, *dans son naturel*; and the natural or unnatural additions will be found to answer thereto.

Far different again is this procedure from that of the ordinary biographer. He copies Moore in giving us much unnecessary matter; he copies him in giving us far more unnecessary comment. The only things he does not copy him in are the excuses for these two faults and the merit which, were they far greater, would redeem them.

The next example seems to me, as I have already said, to be the capital example of the kind. It is true that Lockhart had everything in his favour. He had ample material; he had complete knowledge of it; he had a real affection for his subject; he had nothing to conceal; he had, if not the same sort of personal curiosity, half-genuine, half-morbid, which Moore had to cater for in the case of Byron, a general interest in his hero which has seldom been equalled and never exceeded. But in literature, as in other games, it is not sufficient to have cards; you must know how to play them. Lockhart played his admirable cards to even greater admiration. His play has indeed been subjected to tests that may be called hardly fair. The recent publication of Scott's complete *Diary* was such a test; and it is not necessary to dwell much on the triumphant fashion in which Lockhart emerged from it. Except a very little which for divers reasons he could not have published, and a very little more which on the whole it was better taste

for him not to publish, there may be said to have been absolutely nothing of interest or importance in the complete *Diary* which he had not given in his extracts. We had more in bulk, but we had nothing new in kind. We learnt nothing, and there was no fear of our learning anything, derogatory to Sir Walter and hitherto concealed; but we learnt also nothing favourable to him that had, either by maladroitness or bad faith, been held back. Some of the new matter was painful; almost all of it was superfluous.

But only they of little faith or little intelligence can have been much surprised or greatly relieved by this passage of Lockhart's through the ordeal. To any really good literary judge the thing was certain beforehand. This *Life* had the "certain vital marks." I am aware of course that, putting entirely aside the usual vague and intangible prejudice against Lockhart, some good and well-disposed judges have expressed themselves as not wholly satisfied with parts of his treatment, have considered him unfair to Constable and the Ballantynes and so forth. But the elaborate justification of Constable which was published some years ago left on my mind no feeling that Lockhart had treated him unfairly; and those who disapprove of the treatment of the Ballantynes, usually inculpate not the *Life* itself, but divers side controversies and appendices with which we have here nothing to do. What we have to do with is the presentation of the life and conversation of a great man on a great scale; and that this has never been done better I am sure, that it ever will be done better I find great difficulty in believing. The special point of the work is the unmatched combination of excellence in the selection and editing with excellence in the connecting narrative. Boswell's matter is delightful, and excellently arranged for his purpose. But whenever he becomes at all original he becomes (were it not for the pleasingness of his coxcombery and its advantages as a

set-off) a bore. Moore's dissertations are sometimes superfluous, and not always intrinsically very sound. In the examples to be noticed later Carlyle's monologue, as was his wont, has sometimes a habit of submerging Sterling; and the biographer is altogether so much greater a man than his subject, that there is an occasional sense of incongruity. Sir George Trevelyan, whose relation to his hero may be said to have been very similar to that of Lockhart to Scott, and who, like Lockhart, was fortunate in possessing abundant material, sometimes seems to have found himself a little cramped by the relationship, and nowhere seems to me to have quite attained the full and equable command both of his pen and his subject which is so remarkable in his predecessor.

It is in this full and equable command both of his materials and his own arrangement of them that Lockhart's unique excellence consists. He had to deal with an almost faultless subject,—for there is absolutely no stain on Scott's memory except his clandestine tradings with the Ballantynes, where it is evident that some strange delusion held him from the first, as to the distinctly unprofessional, nay, as to the questionably honest, character of these relations. There was therefore a not inconsiderable danger that he should present (as so many biographers have presented to us) a faultless monster, or should busy himself in tedious endeavours to whitewash small faults into positive virtues. The best evidence that he has not done this is the almost incredible but actual fact that there have been people, both at the time and since, who have thought him unfair to Scott. The truth of course is that he has contrived with consummate art to let the character of his hero show itself as good but not in the least goody, as heroic but not in the least theatrical. Yet another distinguishing grace of this great book,—“the best book in the world” as a person who was not ignorant of



the other best books in the world once called it to me—is the singular skill with which the author, while never obtruding himself, never obtrusively effaces himself. He is often actually on the scene: he is constantly speaking in his own person; and yet we never think of him as the man with the pointing-stick at the panorama, as the beadle at the function, as the ring-master of the show. He seems to stand rather in the relation of the epic poet to his characters, narrating, omnipresent, but never in the way.

No other biographer, I repeat, seems to me to have reached quite this pitch of art. It is true that Boszpy plays monkey to his master's bear in a very diverting and effective manner; but still the relation may always be stigmatised by foes, and must sometimes be admitted even by friends, to be that of bear and monkey, a contrast diverting and effective, but almost too violent for the best art. There is nothing of this in the *Life of Scott*. Whether Scott is speaking for himself in the autobiography, the diary, and the letters; or whether Lockhart is speaking of and for him, the presentation is continuous, uniform, uninterrupted. Two phrases, often foolishly used but in their original meaning not only harmless but excellent, may be used in that original meaning of this book. It is "as interesting as a novel," and it is "as good as a play." That is (to translate these artless words into more elaborate phraseology), it has the uniform grasp, the sustained and absorbing attraction, of the best works of narrative and dramatic art. It is easy to say that this is due to the subject, that "all depends on the subject," and that here the subject is matchless. I think this can, as it happens, be rather crushingly rebutted by instance. I do not think that the appreciation of Moore above quoted is grudging. But let any one who knows the two books well ask himself soberly what Moore would have made of Scott, and what Lockhart would have made of Byron. As for the ordinary bio-

grapher it is perhaps too heartrending to think what he could have made, if he had given his mind to it, of either. Let any one who knows remember what Lord John Russell made of Moore himself, a subject not of course of the same interest as Scott or Byron, but of interest much above the common; let him remember much more recent instances of even more promising matter, treated by hardly less approved artists, and what came of them. Then, if he does not bless Lockhart and award the crown to him, I have nothing more to say but to repeat that I for my part know no book of the kind equal to this.

Here then we have something like the type and standard example of the elaborate biography of the composite kind, the kind which not stinting itself of any one possible sizing allowable to the biographer, admitting great portions of original matter, and permitting the subject to a great extent to illustrate himself, keeps a perpetual regulating hand on these materials, adjusts the connecting links of narrative and comment to one consistent plan of exposition, and so presents the subject "in the round," on all sides, in all lights, doing this not merely by ingenious management in the original part, but by severe and masterly selection in that which is not original. It has been rumoured from time to time that in addition to the *Diary* further instalments of the Abbotsford papers are to be given to the public. They can hardly be otherwise than welcome in themselves, though it seems idle to wish for the pinched-off clay, the marble chips, the bronze filings when you have the sculptor's finished statue. But after the crucial example of the *Diary* itself, I think it may be taken for granted that the results will be uniform whatever is published. We shall have no lower, but also no really fuller idea of Scott; and we shall have a higher idea of what Lockhart gave and did, by beholding what he deliberately refrained from doing and giving.

The next in order of our books is in a certain way the greatest, as in a certain other way the smallest, of all. But I do not think that the superlative belongs to it as a biography. Of its merits as a book there can be no question, and there never has been any with competent judges. It has sometimes indeed been thought the very best of Carlyle's books, or second only to *The French Revolution*. Its modest length kept the author from the voluminous digressions which beset him so easily; the frequent changes of scene, and the constant necessity for making more or less brief reference to distinguished or interesting persons, excited and fed his unrivalled power of description and characterisation to an extraordinary degree. The sense of battle (for the book begins, if it does not go on, as a polemic against Hare's view of Sterling) gave zest and spirit to the performance. And there can be little doubt that personal memories and affections helped likewise. The result is astonishingly happy. It is brief enough to be read at a moderate stretch; and for my part, often as I have read it, I have seldom been able to begin it again or even to consult it for a casual reference, without following it right through. Although full enough of the author's characteristic manner, it does not show his mannerism at anything like its furthest. The preaching is necessarily subdued; it is administered dramatically and in short doses. The whole is an inculcation of Carlylism no doubt; but it is effected by object-lessons, and with swift and variegated change of scene and character. The famous chapter on Coleridge (admittedly the masterpiece of the book if not of the author) is only the best of infinite good things. The Welsh sketches; the remarks on Cambridge and Sterling's friends there; the ingenious economy of the Torrijos episode, where the hapless expedition gets its full share of celebration and Sterling's own excessively unheroic part in it is skimmed without any dis-

honesty but with consummate art; the scores of portrait vignettes scattered about, and the admirable composition of all these things, make up such a book as few that the world's libraries contain.

Such a book; but such a biography? Here I am not so sure. You can of course see Sterling plainly enough in it, and a rather sorry sight you have of him. That Sterling was the first of all such as cannot "make up their minds to be damned" (in his biographer's words of another person for whom I have much more respect) and yet want better bread than is made of wheat by virtue of which they may be saved,—the father of all the melancholy brood that includes the Arthur Cloughs of real life and the Robert Elsmere of fiction—the conductor and corypheus of the caiff choir who sing undogmatic anthems to a Nehushtan of negation, should not perhaps count too much against him. And no wise man will bear too hardly on the fact of his having turned his back on a certain troublesome and probably dangerous business to which he had put his hand, in order to dry the tears of a "blooming young lady with black eyes." But it is too evident that Sterling, his physical health no doubt aggravating his metaphysical complaints, was a rather poor creature, not unamiable nor ungifted, but with no great originality in him, and without the slightest capacity for taking trouble in order to make up for the lack of originality. Very fortunate indeed was it for him that he was called upon to play no other part than that of an affluent consumptive dawdler, and that he died before youth had quite departed, and therefore before his consumptive dawdling had ceased to be pathetic and begun to be tiresome to his friends.

This is a brutal reduction to plain prose of Carlyle's portrait of him. But the mere fact that it will seem brutal shows on the one hand how skilful the painter is, and on the other that the merits of his picture are the

merits not of biography,—that is to say the presentation of a man as he is—but of romance, or the presentation of something as it is not. All through the book Carlyle plays Socrates to this poor friend of his (with very little fight in him at any time and with none left now) and protects him from the onset of the enemy. That he sometimes effects the rescue by concentrating our attention on himself, is part of the recognised procedure in such cases. But it is by no means always thus that he champions Sterling. I have not the slightest doubt that the variety and brilliancy of the scene-painting, the divergences into side portraits, and all the other purple patches referred to above, had a more or less conscious purpose of avoiding the concentration of too much attention by the reader on the nominal hero. The result no doubt is in a way triumphantly successful. The book has practically founded an immortal Sterling club; there will always be voices to sing *Tu Marcellus eras* in honour of Sterling, and I protest that I am rather ashamed of myself for having said what I believe to be the truth about him just now. Nor can it be said that the biographer may not smooth a little and apologise a good deal; especially where, as in Sterling's case, the faults are only weaknesses and wants. But still, if the standard of biography which has been set up earlier is at all a true one, Sterling never could have furnished a subject for one of the very best of biographies as such. There was simply not enough substance in him for one. And we shall accordingly find that what Carlyle with wonderful art has done is to reverse the tricks of the conjurers, and lead us to believe that we are reading a life of Sterling while Sterling is really "vanished," and we are actually reading an extraordinarily interesting history of the places that he lived in, the men he knew, the events which he shared or did not share, and the personality of his redoubtable and admira-

ble friend and biographer, all thrown up on a background of the shortcomings of the Church and State of England in the nineteenth century.

No two books could in this respect stand in much greater contrast to each other than the *Sterling* and Sir George Trevelyan's *Life and Letters of Macaulay*. The requirements of this last were entirely different; they were met with a just consciousness of their difference, and the result is a success of a perfectly different kind. Macaulay is still a difficult subject to handle. He had grave faults as a writer and some foibles as a man, accompanying great merits as a man and greater gifts as a writer. By an almost unexampled coincidence he has been depreciated by some in a manner which makes others forgive him where he ought not to be forgiven; and he has been admired by some in a way which makes others unduly shy of admiring him. But this applies to his writing chiefly. Speaking under correction, I should say that for some fifteen years after his death, the ideas of him among those who had not known him personally were pretty uniform, and not much more unfavourable among those who rather disliked his writings than among those who admired them. That is to say, he was thought of as an undoubtedly clever, a very generous, and an entirely honourable man, who had retained the faults of a clever and precocious boy,—“cocksureness,” inordinate loquacity, intolerance of fair give-and-take in conversation to a hardly tolerable degree,—a man whose “rough, pistolling ways” extended from literature into life, who was not too scrupulous about carrying personal and political antipathies into his writings and who was not only “cocksure” but also cock a hoop to a degree barely if at all excusable.

And I think it is also not too much to say that Sir George Trevelyan's biography changed this almost at once, changed it even for some who were rather prejudiced against Macaulay, and made it almost impossible for

any future generation which takes the trouble to acquaint itself with him at all to entertain that notion of him which Lord Melbourne's *mot*, the Windsor Castle incident, and a few other things had helped his writings to establish in the minds of the generation before. For it is, I venture to think, one of Sir George's amiable delusions to suppose that Macaulay's writings "give us no more idea of the author than Shakespeare's do." I should say myself that they give a very decided though, as it happens, a very false or at any rate a very incomplete idea of him. There is scarcely a page of the *Essays* or the *History* in which we do not seem to see a man of unquestionable knowledge and of equally unquestionable power, with no small range of sympathy and taste, but with a huge pair of blinkers on for everything and everybody with whom or with which he is not in sympathy, positive to or beyond the verge of arrogance, ready to pronounce and perhaps even to think every one who does not agree with him a fool or a knave or an egregious combination of both, never quite dishonest, but often quite unjust, with little real geniality even in his appreciation of humour, and with little real sympathy even in his appreciation of sentiment.

I do not know whether the family tradition was too strong in Sir George for him even to be aware of this notion of his uncle, which certainly existed at the time he wrote in persons neither infantine nor ill-blooded nor ill-informed. But he could have taken no happier way to substitute something better and juster for it than the way he actually took. The preface to the second edition shows that Sir George had the root of the biographical matter in him. "It was my business," says he, "to show my uncle as he was, and not as I or any one else would have had him." "Oh, brave we!" as Johnson himself might have said. Not of course that the principle extends to publishing *tacenda* of any kind. There are things

which are not disgraceful to a man to have done or written, but of which the publication is obviously unfair to him, which any biographer may suppress and which in some notable later examples of biography have not been suppressed, to the discredit of the subject in the minds of fools, of the biographer in the minds of the wise. But to quote, or rather to paraphrase Sir George again, if a faithful picture of the subject cannot be drawn without injuring his memory, let the drawing alone; if the drawing be undertaken, let it be faithful. Consider what would have happened if Sir George had set himself to cut away all the early priggishness, all the evidences of extreme partisanship in the Croker and other matters, if he had given us a Macaulay all family affection, all sweet reasonableness, all pathetic humanity, a trimmed, shorn, and varnished Macaulay. We should have revolted, we should have said that this was absurd, and we should have liked Macaulay even less than before. Whereas, by giving the rough with the smooth, and letting the man exhibit himself as he actually was, yet with no treacherous or unfair revelation, the revolution of opinion in the minds of some, the establishment once for all of a good opinion in those of others, was done and done thoroughly, so that it will never need to be done again and may defy not merely the critic but also the indiscreet busybody.

If anybody says that by much comparison of instances I have made clear two *secrets de Polichinelle*, first that the life of a man should give us the man and his life and not a collection of dead and inhuman things, secondly that a good life of a man will be found to have been well done itself, and done probably in a rather different way from any other, I bow to the remark. It is more and more becoming clear to me that the only secrets much worth finding out are *secrets de Polichinelle*, things already known to all the world. To convince

yourself of the obvious, neither to fail to see it for mere blindness like the fools, nor to fail to see it because of elaborate and persistent turning away from it like the clever ones, is certainly in these days, and perhaps has been in all, a very important and by no means an extremely simple task. Yet it may be pleaded that if the secret of writing biographies is known to all the world, a now very considerable part of that world (to wit, the writers of biographies) seem to be for the most part absolutely guiltless of the knowledge. And yet "Lives" are being more and more written. In the notes to his recently published translation of Heine's *Deutschland* Mr. Leland informs us that "in one of the best-known minor libraries in Europe" he "found two lives of a distinguished English poet and not a line of his works." It is entirely conceivable; it would not surprise me very much if he had said that he knew an author who had written one of the lives without having read a line of the works. Such things have happened, and are happening. But still, things being so, it might be supposed that the books for which there is such a demand would be supplied good. That would be a gross and grievous mistake. Demand may create supply; it certainly does not necessarily create good supply.

The examples I have taken are pretty well spread over the century (or rather less) in which they all appeared; and though the latest of them made its appearance so to speak yesterday, it is less satisfactory to remember that the subject of that life was born nearly at the extremity of the period. It is quite possible that the materials for biography are not so promising as they used to be. Some persons pretend that the cry about the decay of letter-writing is

nonsense. The cautious arguer will confine himself to replying that at any rate there are great temptations not to write letters. Telegrams, post-cards, correspondence-cards, letter-cards,—all of these things the truly good and wise detest and execrate; it is not quite so certain that they abstain from them. I believe that the habit of keeping a diary has really gone out to a great extent. Too often moreover nowadays the unauthorised person steps in with his privateering before the authorised person is ready for sea; and then the authorised person too often indulges in undignified chasings and cannonadings of his predecessor. Above all there seems to have been lost in this and other things the all-important sense of proportion in books. These things have had a bad effect on the class of persons who are likely to find biographers. One hears of their destroying materials with a, "Please God nobody shall deal with me as — dealt with —." Or else, as was the case with Cardinal Newman, they enjoin a method of dealing with their materials, which, though it permits any one of tolerable intelligence to construct a biography for himself with comparatively little difficulty, does not give him the biography. For it cannot be too often repeated that a real biography ought to be something more than the presentation of mere materials, however excellently calendared, something more than memoirs, letters, diary and so forth. The whole ought to be passed through the mind of a competent and intelligent artist, and to be presented to us, not indeed in such a way that we are bound to take his word for the details, but in such a way that we see a finished picture, a composition, not merely a mass of details and *data*.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

## THE LEGEND OF LAPWATER HALL.

Down the river, beyond Hole Haven and Canvey Island, where the river becomes the sea, there lies on the Essex shore the quaint village of Leigh. Up the hill, beyond the church, the rooks hold noisy traffic, while Leigh hums slumberously below and the ships drive out round the Nore. It is by this way, and over certain fields of corn and beans, that one takes a short cut into the London Road.

When through the bars of the last gate he sees this white road, the way-farer might pitch a stone against the wall of Lapwater Hall, were it not for the clump of trees on the left, which hides it and shelters the pond beside it. Leigh House is its more proper name, but to speak of it with a native it must still be Lapwater Hall. A native of these parts is mostly one who would at first sight be set down for a fisherman, did he not look at least as much like a farm-hand. His taste in drink is catholic, but inclines to mild ale; and there is only one known quarter whence an offer of that drink meets with his refusal. One there is, nevertheless.

At the beginning of the year 1751 Leigh House was falling to pieces. An old house, untenanted and neglected for years, it was scarce worth touching except to pull down. But early in that year, when all South Essex lay in ruts and mud, the folk about Leigh came by a piece of news. For a stranger came on an earless mare and bought Leigh House and farm.

Whence the stranger came no man knew. He had been seen riding through Hadleigh splashed to the wig with mud, and soon after he stopped before Leigh House. He was not a

handsome stranger; of middle height, but massive and ugly in shape like a prize bull-dog, with a coarse face and a squint. But he rode a fine brown mare, hard and useful as well as handsome, and well set on good legs; but odd and almost uncanny to look at because of her want of ears. Now in those times one might wait a twelvemonth before seeing a stranger ride by Leigh House, let alone one on an earless mare. Wherefore Amos Tricker, who was hedging by the road when the mare stopped before him, stared mightily.

"What's this place?" asked the stranger.

A stranger on an earless mare was a startling thing enough, but a man who didn't know Leigh House, in sight of which Amos Tricker had spent his life, was astounding. Amos began to collect his thoughts.

"What the devil are you staring at? Damme! Is this Leigh House?"

Amos Tricker nodded feebly. The stranger put the brown mare over the falling paling and walked her round the rotten walls of the house. Then he trotted off Eastwood way with no further word, followed throughout by the stare of Amos Tricker until full a mile out of sight. After which Amos brought back his eyes to the hedge, dropped his knife and trudged away; the occasion demanding confabulation and a mug.

Now the stranger had been seen in Hadleigh, the next village, as I have said. And the good folk of Hadleigh, having larger opportunity and mutual aid, were in case to add more imaginative embellishment to his appearance than the single head of Amos Tricker



could easily conceive. Nevertheless, in all their varying descriptions of his broad frame, his long arms, his squint, his pistols, his brown mare, and his manner of asking the distance of Leigh House, there was no word of the mare's want of ears; and when Amos Tricker alluded to it, the improvement was disallowed by weight of numbers. The smith, who was a very old and very bow-legged man, and who sat permanently at his door while his son did what was to do in the smithy, appealed to the judgment of the company as to the likelihood of a mare with no ears passing his professional eye without his instant observation of the deficiency; and the company supported him, notwithstanding the valiant adherence of Amos Tricker to his own statement, continuing the discussion until by contrariety the mare was like to have four ears and the rider horns and a tail.

Then to the folk of Leigh and thereabout there came news travelling from Rochford by way of Eastwood. Mr. Gabriel Craddock had bought Leigh House and farm, and the house was to be rebuilt at once and in most uncommon haste. Before time had been allowed for a tithe of the proper canvass of this information, there descended upon Leigh House Mr. Gabriel Craddock himself, with the attorney from Rochford, and a master-builder; and Amos Tricker had triumphant vindication throughout Hadleigh, for Mr. Gabriel Craddock was the stranger, and the brown mare manifestly had no ears.

Then was a great measuring in and staking out, and knocking down and digging up, and in good time the red brick outline of the new house rose above ground. Time and again would come Mr. Craddock and critically inspect the work, grumbling unceasingly with strange oaths. In everything he found delay and a trick to cheat a too easy gentleman; and the language in which he expressed his opinions to

the bricklayers was something outrageously beyond what they had ever undergone from a foreman. It was uncommon strong, they held, even for a gentleman.

All this time Leigh learned little of Mr. Gabriel Craddock, and Leigh gossip fed on speculation. The brown mare with no ears brought its rider to and fro at irregular times, and the bricklayers were exposed to uncertain visitations. What became of Mr. Gabriel Craddock in the intervals was a mystery,—even the attorney had no notion. When he stayed at Leigh at all it was at the Smack Inn, where he would stable his mare and walk across to the house; and when he walked it was observed that from much riding he was more than a little bow-legged. His surly reserve and jealous exaction of respect drove the good neighbours to invention to keep the gossip fairly going. It was chiefly believed that he was a Government official, coming into these quiet parts to serve some ruthless purpose of the gaugers, the natural foes of half Leigh. Meg was the brown mare's name in truth; but why had she no ears? Questionless it was some part of a horse-taming charm,—something beyond the lunane and honey-cake that nobody doubted Meg had been already treated with. For the brown mare loved her master.

Now the journeymen who laid brick and rafter at Leigh House were stout men of Essex and good ale-fellows, who turned from no pot but an empty one. Wherefore it was provided in their hiring that they should have good beer in part wage, every man his two pots a day, for the humectation of his limy throat and the comfort of his stomach: in the fetching and carrying whereof old Amos Tricker was kept at a continual trot with a great wheelbarrow, receiving fairness of his load in divers gulps bestowed, over and above what mayhap had spilled upon the drouthy way. For these were good brothers of the pot, and let no man stand thirsty by, al-

beit a mere half-gallon a day might seem little enough to spare from, God wot. And so they took their drink joyously together, every man with his nose in his own proper pot, thanking God it was no less, nor thinner.

Now though each man's lawful due was but two pots a day yet all looked to drink more on occasion. For past memory of any bricklayer or carpenter in Essex a visit on a work from the owner, the master's master, ever brought with it ale in plenty for the pledging of his good health and the luck of the new house. And often, were he a good fellow in his degree, the gentleman would take his own pot in the midst of them, and for that pot gentle and simple were good neighbours together. So that when Mr. Gabriel Craddock first came, and having sworn his hour or two, rode away leaving no sup of ale nor piece of money behind him, he was thought to err from forgetfulness; for men's faults should be judged with charity, and the gentleman was so free with his language that it was not fit he should be sparing with his liquor. But when he had come and gone again and again it was plain that Mr. Craddock was either illiberal or slow of apprehension, for notwithstanding many shrewd hints, in the way of wiping of heads, speaking across scaffoldings of the dryness of the day, and standing bottom-up of empty pots and cans, the master's wages-drink was all that was tasted.

And so it was until the walls were of full height and the last roof-beam was being fixed. Now the fixing of the last roof-beam is the occasion of great jollity and rejoicing in the building of all houses, and has been since houses were first made; and at that time by good and ancient precedent all men leave toil and drink at the charge of him whose house they build. Sometimes also they eat, but that is a matter of grace and not of the firm rule of honourable custom, which provides for good drink in any case, rather as a

right than as a kindness and courtesy. It chanced that as this last beam was being set in its place, Mr. Craddock looked on from below, and when in the end it rested as it should, and the workmen gave a cheer together and left their places, gathering before the house, he, not understanding the proceeding, and feeling no sentiment in the occasion, was about ordering them back to the proper use of their time; but was met by a respectful demand for the usual beer.

Mr. Craddock's squint intensified with ire. "Beer, ye boozy scabs! Ha'n't ye enough a'ready? Don't I pay for it, and for every minute of time ye rob me of, ye swabs, ye swill-pot hounds? There's the pond for ye. Go and lap water, like the lazy dogs ye are! Lap water, ye hounds; if more drink ye must have, lap water!"—and the convivial journeymen sneaked off chopfallen under a hurricane of oaths which sent Amos Tricker's daughter Nan, who was bringing a message, out of earshot aghast. Then Mr. Gabriel Craddock, with a furious promise to the master-builder that he would teach his men the respect due to a gentleman, and break the head of the next he caught loitering at his work or asking for beer, took himself off.

It was a sad defeat for those illustrious drinkers, the bricklayers and carpenters. Here was an immemorial precedent, a vested interest, a privilege of the craft, broken down at a blow. Insult had been added to injury and their dry throats had been referred to a pond, to which refreshment indeed they were like to be reduced, each man, in gleeful anticipation of that last beam, having disposed of his two pots early in the day. What could be done? Obviously the correct thing would have been a strike, had strikes been invented, but they had not. So the journeymen were fain to begin work again with ill-will and grumbling. It was the first house any man of them had worked on without

a single drink at the owner's expense ; all the comfort had gone out of the day with the two pots of ale, and—there was the ignoble suggestion of the pond !

"Tells us to lap watter, an' calls us swill-pot dogs," quoth one. "Mighty fond o' callin' names 'twould seem. Maybe'll call t' house Lapwatter Hall, an' folk'll know what t'expect."

The name touched his neighbour's fancy, and soon was passed on and bandied up and down among the new walls and rafters, amid malicious grins and chuckles. At night the joke was carried to all the ale-houses within five miles. It was a poor joke, looked at from a severely critical standpoint, but Leigh folk were not severely critical in those days, and "Lapwater Hall" was hailed as an apt stroke of facetious nomenclature, and soon acquired general currency. So much so that by the time the wainscoting was well in hand, scarce a soul thought of calling the new house anything else. This the more readily because during the years of desolation there had arisen a Leigh House in the village hard by the church, properly the Black House, but holding the better-sounding title by spoliation from the wreck ; so that in the confusion between the old Leigh House that was the new house, and the new Leigh House that was the older of the two, a distinctive name was wanted somewhere, and Lapwater Hall did admirably. Lapwater Hall it soon was then, in all seriousness. And Mr. Gabriel Craddock's popularity did not grow.

This he knew nothing of, however, even if he cared. His affairs kept him much away, and his visits became few and short, to nobody's sorrow. But when the last dab of paint had been laid, and the builder's men betook themselves to more potent parts, Mr. Craddock arrived to take up residence. Nan Tricker, under the eye of Mrs. Dudgit who was to keep house, had so well swept and tidied that the master could pick no fault until he

found her conversing blissfully over the side fence with Tim Ladds of the next farm. Those true lovers he parted summarily, and sent poor Nan about her kitchen duty.

The next day Mr. Craddock began to realise his unpopularity. The stables being ready, it was desirable to fetch Meg over from the Smack. And this he sallied forth to do, riding-whip in hand.

Down Lost Lane walked two men. "They're into Lapwatter Hall, 'twould seem," quoth one. Mr. Craddock looked round quickly ; he had not heard the sentence distinctly. Still he went across the stable-yard and gazed after those two men. Then he turned and thoughtfully walked out into the road and toward the bridlepath over the fields. These he surveyed with complacency. He was a country gentleman, with good land of his own, and a house and farm to make any man respected. Who the devil had stacked that rick ? He would visit its crookedness upon that person's head. And so he swaggered along. At the first gate he met a small boy with a basket. The boy, having no hat, pulled his forelock, and held back the gate. "What's that, boy ?" demanded Mr. Craddock, pointing at the basket with his whip. "Treacle and candles, sir, for Lapwatter Hall." Mr. Gabriel Craddock stared hard for twelve seconds. Then he smote that boy's head and stalked on. In Leigh his reception was not of a piece. One or two pulled off their hats, others stared over fences. He stalked into the Smack, and the company, half-a-dozen fishermen, stopped talking suddenly and looked a little sheepish ; some rose and made obeisance, others sat stolidly in their places. Among the sitters was Big Sam, a burly, smuggling, hard-drinking ruffian, whom all Leigh went in fear of, who cared for nobody, and would rather fight the first man he saw than not. Big Sam resumed the conversation with offensive pointedness. "Gentleman ? aren't

no man, let alone gentleman!" To certain expressive coughs, nods and winks Sam paid no heed. "'Taren't no man as tells another to drink out o' t'horse pond. 'Tis a swine. An' so they calls it Lapwatter Hall. Ha! ha!" And Big Sam guffawed in Mr. Gabriel Craddock's face.

At the beginning of the speech that gentleman's ill-sorted eyes had turned ferociously on the group. Now with one stride and a surprising reach of arm he seized the great red ear which was on the nearer side of big Sam's shaggy head and banged that head mightily against the wall.

Big Sam was on his feet in an instant, and hurled himself at his assailant, but was met with a straight left, flush on the face, like the kick of a horse. Then, as he staggered and winked, the butt of Mr. Craddock's riding-whip beat across his skull till Big Sam lay heaped on the floor with broken head enough for three; and Mr. Craddock, leaving a minatory curse for the abashed company, strode through the door.

It was a brisk mile to the house for the brown mare, and Meg knew she carried an ill-tempered man. In the road before the gate stood a waggon, laden with many pots, pans, and crockery. Nan Tricker, emerging from the back premises with a frothsome mug of ale, met Mr. Craddock full in the way and began explanations without waiting for the angry question she foresaw.

"'Twere for Tim, sir, 'Tim Ladds o' Crispin's. Waggoner were carryin' the crocks an' pots to Black House as guessing 'twere the Leigh House meant, but Tim bringed him on here, sir, knowin' as 'twas Lapwater—" Nan Tricker checked the word too late.

"Go on, damme! Lapwater Hall! Lapwater Hall, ye'll call it, will ye, ye drabs?" and Mr. Craddock snatched the mug and flung it afar. "It sha'n't have the name for nothing, rot you, damn you all! For water you shall

drink, or nothing! Barn ye, I'll slit the gullet of the man, woman or child drinking aught but water in my place! I'll let the liquor out of 'em, damme! D'ye hear?" he added in a shout for general information, poor Nan having fled; "if a soul drinks my liquor, begad, I'll take it back with a carving knife!"

And Mr. Gabriel Craddock stuck to his programme. He kept the cellar-key in his own pocket. He wouldn't allow brewing on the premises, and all good drink was kept for his own regalement under lock and key. Tenderly he nursed the affront offered his house, and magnified it day by day. No innocent yokel could show himself about the place, on whatever errand, without drawing forth Mr. Craddock with "Eh! you want my beer, ye sodden hound, don't ye? And this here's Lapwater Hall, is it? Go and lap water then, ye son of a brach, lap water!" Whereat the unhappy intruder usually made off as quickly as he might.

Poor Mrs. Dugdit was sadly fallen off in body from privation of mild ale. Often in the innermost privacy of the kitchen would she confide to Nan Tricker that it was what she hadn't been brought up to, and wouldn't abide. Nevertheless she stayed in the service, being in just such terror of Mr. Craddock as almost equally to fear staying and leaving. Amos Tricker, who was handy man about the house, fell into despondency of a depth which only a farm-hand with no beer can ever know. Insomuch that it seemed to his jaundiced and longing perceptions that the master purposely took his own drink as much as possible in full view of the sty or the stab'e, or wherever Amos might be at work, which he regarded as equally unkind to a "man's thirst an' feelins."

And all this time Mr. Gabriel Craddock made no friends, high or low. No man will make friends in South Essex who is inhospitable with his drink; so this man never had a friend

but his brown mare, who lapped water with contentment. Even now he was away from home as much as in it, but for such irregular times that no relief was afforded the household by his absence. Often he would lock himself in and sleep and drink all day. The various opinions of the neighbourhood settled down into a steady belief that he was the Devil.

And so for months till a winter's night when the ringed moon looked now and again through a rent in swarming clouds; when all Rochford Hundred, Foulness, and Canvey lay wetter and marshier than ever; when folk were mostly indoors and Lapwater Hall was barred, bolted, and shuttered. Mrs. Dudit and Nan Tricker sat in the kitchen, the former sewing little bags to hold chips from the gibbet at Hadleigh Cross to cure ague, and the latter listening for a whistle which might tell of Tim Ladds going home down Lost Lane. Mrs. Dudit was never a woman of extravagantly high spirits, and to-night she was more dismal than usual. A dog had been howling woefully in the yard since nightfall, and now a huge tallow winding-sheet had arisen by the flame of the candle, and death in the house was certain. The dog had been quiet for some few minutes, and the winding sheet, influenced by a fresh draught, was disappearing rapidly, when there smote on Nan's alert ear the sound of a horse's feet,—a lame horse's feet, it would seem, falling slowly and painfully almost all together. As it neared the stable yard, Nan said, "'Tis the master, and t'mare's lamed."

Scarce were the words uttered when with a great kick the yard-door flew open, and before the two women stood Mr. Gabriel Craddock, haggard and miry.

"G'law, sir!" said the women.

"Shut your mouth," he replied, hoarsely. "Tie this arm with a bit of that apron."

Then they saw that his right arm hung loose at his side, while blood

dripped from his fingers upon the floor. Mrs. Dudit, terrified, scissored the sleeve away at his direction, and wrapped her torn apron tightly around a bad wound over the elbow joint. Mr. Craddock reached for a jug of water and emptied it at a draught.

"Any more lights?" pointing to the candle.

"No."

"Put it out,"—he did so himself. "Bolt and bar, and neither stir nor breathe, or by God I'll come and twist your necks. Say nothing, whoever comes." Then he went out.

Mrs. Dudit and Nan Tricker sat in the dark trembling, not daring to speak. They could hear him going toward the fence by the road. In a few minutes he was heard approaching again, this time with a quiet and stealthy step, and the women clung together in a cold terror. Was he creeping back to murder them? No, the steps passed round to the back. But now there came the noise of many horses, pounding through the mire of the road, and nearing. Before the house they stopped, with shouts and trampling.

"House there, hulloa, hulloa!" They were coming from the road toward the door.

"Hulloa, there, hulloa!" And there was a thundering at the front door. The two women sat and quaked.

Then many voices said many things. "Come on, come on! Why stand here?" "Maybe they've seen him." "Get away ahead!" "Where?" "He's doubled." "Knock again, or go round. They'll lend us fresh horses." Then the thundering began again, and some came toward the stable-yard, shouting. Nan Tricker wept, biting hard on a thick fold of Mrs. Dudit's gown to keep back a scream.

In the midst of the knocking arose a shout of "Here's the nag! He's close about!" And a shower of blows fell upon the door behind which

the women were. "Open, open! in the King's name! King's officers!" The door crashed in, and Nan Tricker and Mrs. Dudit fell into a corner with a dismal howl. They were dragged out, limp and hysterical, among half-a-dozen men with steaming horses, as mired as Mr. Craddock, and wept and gasped unintelligibly at all questions.

Then the men took lights and searched high and low, in the house, the yard, and the outbuildings. For two of them were officers, and the man they sought was a powerfully built fellow of middle-height, who squinted, and who was Jerry Lynch the highwayman.

His operations on the great Essex Road and elsewhere had been so extensive and daring that he had long "weighed enough" in the matter of rewards to make it worth while to run a party for his capture. There was no other way of doing it. He worked alone and confided in nobody, never drank while "on the game," and in all things was the most businesslike and watchful high-tobymen unhung. He had been sighted near Shenfield, and had shot one man dead in his saddle before getting away across country with a bullet through his own arm. By Ingrave, Horndon, Laindon, and Pitsea they had followed him, and the brown mare must have been already well spent, or they could never have kept within hail of Jerry Lynch, who knew every dyke and fence. Down in the marshes, the hither side of Benfleet, he had bogged them cleverly and walked his nag slowly up the hill before their faces, back toward a further stretch of the road they had lately crossed, leaving them to come out as they got in; and so they followed the road and came to Lapwater Hall.

All that night lanterns flashed about Lapwater Hall and the land near it. In the grey of the morning Meg was seen shivering and whickering piteously by the pond, and in the

pond floated a hat. They took one of those great rakes which Essex people called a crome and dragged forth from under the culvert by the end the staring corpse of Mr. Gabriel Craddock.

Under the culvert he must have hidden himself, hanging on by the broken ragstone above him, until he fainted from the drain of blood from his arm and fell. As the day came and the news flew, the Leigh folk gathered about the pond and stared and whispered. Here was a judgment! The man was drowned in the water he would have driven thirsty men to when he owed them beer!

Staring so, they found another thing floating on the water and clinging near the edge. They fished it out and turned it over in amazement. It was a pair of horse's ears joined by a strap and fitted with a catch to hold to the head-stall. They were the false ears that Brown Meg wore when Mr. Gabriel Craddock was Jerry Lynch, the high-tobygloak!

Such was the end of Mr. Gabriel Craddock in the body. Now it was but a few months after this, when the hives were opened and the lambs fell, that Tim Ladds married Nan Tricker and there was rejoicing. Then Amos Tricker, having been for three days before bemused with much of the real knock-me-down native to the Smack Inn, conceived a notion of descending into the cellars of Lapwater Hall, which stood tenantless, and satisfying his doubts as to the quantity of liquor lying therein, and perchance the quality also. But when he came to the head of the cellar steps, it being a gloomy corner, there stood the ghost of Mr. Gabriel Craddock mug and spigot in hand, and squinted upon him, beckoning him down to drink of the old ale. For the chief of all the highwayman's sins, and that which held his soul to the earth, was his denial of good drink to his fellow man, and this the poor ghost did to purge it. But Amos would have none of the invitation, thirsty though he was, and ran with



all his might, never stopping till he fell among the wedding party, blue and speechless. And of the many thirsty men of Essex, good ale-fellows, who since have seen old Jerry (for so the ghost is called), none yet have accepted his offer of drink, wherefore he still walks Lapwater Hall, and can have no rest until he shall have redeemed, in some sort, his unpardonable fault. So that when a bandy-legged ghost on an earless mare

flies over Benfleet marshes, men turn aside and seek an ale-house; and when the same ghost, with mug and spigot, beckons the passer-by to drink at Lapwater Hall, he hurries on and seeks an ale-house too. For there certainly remains none of Mr. Craddock's liquor in those cellars, and ghostly ale is but thin drink. And this is the legend of Lapwater Hall.

ARTHUR MORRISON.

## FRENCH GIRLS' SCHOOLS.

It may be taken for granted that not many people select the opening of January as a time for a journey to Paris, unless their visit has a particular purpose. When I stepped out of the train from Calais, on a bitterly cold morning early in the present year, and drove through the twilight streets where the grey dawn was still struggling with the dying gas-lamps, my own particular purpose was to avail myself of an opportunity for seeing something of the education of girls in Paris and its environs, both in Elementary and Secondary Schools, under the guidance of the friend who was awaiting me at the Grand Hôtel de la Sorbonne in the Quartier Latin, a hotel that I had never even heard of before, and which is frequented solely by people who are in some way or other connected with educational work. There is really little more than a fortnight in the whole year during which any one who is actively engaged in education can hope to see anything of the working of Continental schools. Terms and holidays are apt to coincide pretty closely everywhere, but as a rule the long summer vacation is longer than ours,—in France it occupies the whole of August and September—and this is compensated by shorter holidays at Christmas and at Easter, giving a certain margin of time in January and in the spring, during which English schools are still in vacation while French schools are already at work. It was of the January interval that I was about to take advantage, and in my friend Madame Armagnac I had the companionship of one who had herself been formerly connected with the French Education Department, and who is possessed of an unusually wide acquaintance with educational matters, not only in France and Eng-

land, but even in such out of the way parts of the world as Algeria and Corsica.

It was to her that I owed my introduction to M. Felix Martel, one of the eight Inspecteurs Générales, or Inspectors in Chief, of the French Education Department, and the author of several interesting books and pamphlets on primary and technical education in France. This gentleman was good enough to call upon me on the afternoon of my arrival, not only to bring me the necessary authorisation from the Minister of Public Instruction which was to open for me the doors of any schools that I might wish to visit, but also to take much kind trouble in sketching for me a programme, which was intended to enable me to make the very most of the short time that I had at my disposal. I am glad to take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude for the invaluable aid and counsel which was placed at my service with such ready friendliness. It seemed to me that the fact of my being the widow of a Senior Inspector in our own Education Department was regarded by him as a claim upon himself for special cordiality and courtesy. But, indeed, the name of Sandford was in itself a kind of letter of recommendation; for the long connection of my husband's distinguished cousin with the work of elementary education in England appeared to be perfectly well known to M. Martel, as well as to most of the educational people whom I met on the other side of the Channel.

Of a great educational progress in France since 1870 I had long been dimly aware, but even a passing glimpse of the remarkable work actually accomplished during the last twenty years is little less than start-

ling. "An absolute Renaissance" it has been called, and I do not think the epithet is an exaggerated one. Of all that has been done I have neither the time nor the ability to speak, nor can I pause at the present moment to make due allowance for such inevitable deficiencies and mistakes as of course must form some part of the volume of every great movement. I can only note down the three great lines of achievement which have made the most impression on my mind: (1) The extraordinary progress that has been made in Elementary Education. (2) The well-ordered Training Colleges (*Écoles Normales*) for teachers of all grades. (3) That magnificent institution, the Conseil Supérieur, or great representative Council of Education. This last seems to me the finest thing that has been done for education, from the constitutional point of view, by any European people since the education movement first began.

Such have been some of the effects of a great national revival. When we come to ask the cause, there is only one possible answer. We find it in the impulse given to patriotic feeling by the awful experiences of that which is still spoken of, which, I suppose, ever will be spoken of, as "*l'année terrible*, that dreadful year." It is as if the entire spirit of the nation had been, as it were, retempered by its sudden and unexpected plunge into the bitter waters of adversity. Patriotism, longing to expend itself in service, fastened eagerly on the idea that defective education had played no inconsiderable part in the misfortunes of the country, and earnest men who had been rowing against a sluggish tide of popular indifference for years, now suddenly found that all France was with them, and that they could scarcely move fast enough for the national impatience towards the realisation of those long cherished ideals in which they had once found it so hard to awaken any adequate degree of interest.

To begin with Elementary Educa-

tion. France is now as decidedly ahead of ourselves, at any rate on several important points, as, I think it is not too much to say, she was distinctly in the rear before 1870.

I can but make my meaning clear by giving a description of my own impressions. To begin with then there is the *préau*. The first time I entered a French Primary School for girls, we were with M. Sché, one of the *Sous-Inspecteurs de Gymnastique* for the Communal Schools of Paris, to whom M. Martel had kindly given me an introduction, and as he was taking me there to see school-drill, we went direct into the *préau*, an apartment so almost unheard of in English schools that we have not even a name for it. The word *pré* with the diminutive *au* means literally "a small field," and the *préau* is merely a spacious empty room, like an indoor field, in which the whole school can move freely about during recreation, but which is used and intended for a variety of other purposes besides play. As far as I could hear, no Elementary School in France is without one.

"What would you do without this *préau*?" I once said to the mistress of a large *École Maternelle* (Infant School). She looked at me as if I had said, What would you do without a roof, or without windows?—"Why, we *couldn't* do without it," she answered, in the tone of a person called upon for a truism.

The first *préau* that I saw was a low oblong apartment, occupying the basement of the school-building. There was a concrete floor, the ceiling was supported by iron pillars, and there was a bench fixed against the walls all round the room. Above this bench there were pegs for hats and cloaks, but this was not, I afterwards found, a universal arrangement, and of course it rather spoilt the appearance of the room. There was no other furniture, except a few light tables and chairs, and some gymnastic apparatus at the far end. And here I may observe that the architecture of French schools is, as

a rule, neither picturesque nor ornamental. The school is always a solid many-windowed block, about three stories high, either oblong, or built round a court-yard like so many French hotels. Externally it is as plain as a factory, not an unnecessary *franc* has been spent on decoration; but within, no reasonable outlay has been spared to make the building perfectly fit for its purpose. And this liberality seems to me to be simply right. Compulsory education imposes responsibilities. If the State insists on taking charge of children for so many hours a day, the State is bound to take care both that the children's time shall be well and profitably employed, and that no unnecessary injury be done to their health by defective educational arrangements. For instance, if large masses of children are to be restrained from movement and kept poring over books and slates in rooms where the atmosphere has not been thoroughly renewed for hours together, the conditions can hardly be regarded as favourable to growth and vigour. If any one is unable to imagine what I mean, I would ask him to enter any class-room in any Elementary School in England somewhere about eleven o'clock in the morning, and he will know. In the French school the child's natural need of movement and change of air is recognised and supplied. Every class has and ought to have its own class room, well lighted and well ventilated, where the pupils sit at desks and do their lessons; but for gymnastic exercises, for drill, for recreation, for singing, there is always the *préau*, and the very existence of such an apartment gives an elasticity to the programme which must materially tend to make school-life happier, and therefore far more healthy.

Several doors open into the *préau*, of which one communicates with the *cantine*, an institution which we only possess in the modified form of charitable efforts to give meals to the children in our poorest schools during the winter months. In France, every

Elementary School has its *cantine*, organised by the Municipality, which provides a hot meal for all those pupils who do not return to their homes for *déjeuner* at half-past eleven.<sup>1</sup> The children pay for their mid-day meal by means of counters, which are bought by their parents at so much a dozen; but in cases of poverty, either chronic or occasional, these tickets can be obtained without payment, though, when the children give them in, they do so just as the others do, and none of their companions know whether it is by the care of the State or of their own parents that these little ones are fed. Before we exclaim at the cost to the tax-payer, we must remember that the French have no Poor-Law like ours, and that this is simply one of their methods for distributing relief, and probably less costly than our own.

It is something to be able to feel that there hardly can be such a thing as an absolutely starving child in Paris within the limits of school-age, and this, not in winter only, but all the year round. One meal a day, at least, the State insists upon, and it seemed to me that this vigilance over the health of the young, this determination to take off for them the sharpest edge of extreme privation without marking them with the brand of pauperism, must in time have visible effects on the physical well-being of the entire population. What an untold relief to many mothers it must be to know that, on school-days at any rate, their children are at least sure of one good meal a day. It is eaten on temporary tables formed with boards and trestles, which are brought into the *préau* from the *cantine*.

There was a lady already in the *préau* when we entered, whom M. Sché introduced as an Inspector of Physical Exercises in Girls' Schools, under the French Education Department.

<sup>1</sup> It may be observed that French school-hours are longer than ours, and indeed, in my opinion, far too long. They are from half-past eight to half-past eleven in the morning, and then from one to five in the afternoon.

Here, too, was another novelty. In France the appointment of Lady Inspectors, both for Girls' Schools and for Infant Schools, is a regular part of the official organisation. And now you must imagine a long procession of little girls, small baby creatures from the Infant Department, who enter the *préau* by another door, and go through simple exercises and pretty marching, winding in and out of the iron pillars and singing nearly all the time. And then these little ones ran away, and from yet another door issued a less numerous troop of elder girls, for this school was situated in a fairly well-to-do district, where parents do not take their children away at the earliest possible moment, but let them stay on at school till thirteen or even fourteen. Very neat they all looked, each girl wearing the *tablier scolaire*, or school-apron, which is so universal in France that it is almost a sort of uniform worn by schoolgirls of every age and class. It is always made of some black woollen stuff, and is a sort of blouse, with full loose sleeves buttoned at the wrists, which entirely covers the dress and fastens behind. Pretty it certainly is not, but it is eminently suitable, and I think it contributes to produce a general effect of smartness and good order, which certainly makes a pleasing impression. These elder girls also sang, as they marched into position, but not, of course, when doing "parallel bars," which was evidently a favourite exercise and particularly well done. The movement never ceased, about forty girls going through the bars in sets, and, though without music, keeping time. They were, as I have already said, in their ordinary dress, no exercises requiring a special costume being attempted.

Another day we visited two other Primary Schools for girls; the first in the well-to-do regions beyond the Champs Elysées, attended chiefly by the daughters of gardeners, coachmen, artisans, small tradespeople, all

the little world that lives by supplying the domestic needs of a wealthy neighbourhood; the other in the Rue Lacordaire, one of the very poorest quarters in Paris.

The first was really an excellent school, though in a modest building, and with the smallest *préau* that I saw anywhere; but then all the pupils, or almost all, went home to their *déjeuner*, and as the Directress said to me, they needed a *préau* less than many. I think it was here that I saw reading and writing taught simultaneously, from a First Reading-Book published in the written character, so that the printed alphabet need not be attempted until the scholar has at any rate got beyond the Primer. The teachers said that children taught in this manner learn to read more rapidly than those who are set to acquire two alphabets at once, according to the usual plan. Here, too, I remember, I was present at a very good lesson on history, a lesson which was quite elementary, and which, nevertheless, had in it both life and interest. The method employed seemed to be (a) To give a lesson, prepared by the teacher, upon a certain chapter in a little school-history, which is then set for preparation against the next time. (b) The result is tested in the second lesson by prepared questions,—not questions set hap-hazard out of a book, which is consulted from moment to moment. It was this second lesson which was in progress when we entered the classroom, and I was really much edified by the readiness with which questions on the reigns of Charles VIII. and Louis XII. were answered. It is true that the questions were very easy, and that only broad outlines and principal events and characters were attempted; but this seemed to me precisely the kind of instruction that was suitable to the occasion.

History in France does not appear to be subordinated either to science or to language. Great stress is laid, even in Primary Schools, upon the duty of making the young acquainted with

the history of their own country. Some slight sketch of universal history is given as a background, but the history and geography of France form the essential object. There is perhaps room for reflection whether the absence of background, which a mistaken theory of thoroughness has produced in many English schools, does not result in what may be called a want of historical perspective, without which the facts of history can never be retained and harmonised as parts of an organic whole, but lie heaped in the memory in loose and disconnected layers very difficult to produce when wanted, very apt to get into confusion, and sometimes even felt to be burdensome to the mind. History in our own Elementary Schools is an "extra subject," and by no means the one that is universally chosen. It is not supposed to "pay" as well as geography, and there is an idea that it offers more opportunity than many other subjects for those disconcerting questions whereby the examiner (and there are such examiners) whose particular knack it is to convict children of ignorance rather than to find out what they actually have been taught, may easily disappoint the labours of a whole year. In France some elementary knowledge of history is included even in that *brevet d'études primaires* which must be obtained before any child is free for employment, a *brevet* of so very elementary a character that many children do obtain it before they are twelve years old.<sup>1</sup>

We had some difficulty in finding our way to the Rue Lacordaire, which was in such a remote part of Paris that the very cab-drivers scarcely seemed to know where it was, and even the one to whom we eventually entrusted ourselves politely suggested that we must be making a mistake, that we could not want to go *there*.

<sup>1</sup> It is a question whether the possibility of passing the required examination at so very early an age, must not detract from the value of the certificate.

At last, however, we found ourselves at the entrance of a school-building which, for once, seemed imposing by its very size, in contrast with its surroundings. It was intended for twelve hundred children, boys, girls, and infants, and inquiring for the Girls' Department, we were conducted up stairs to the room of Madame la Directrice,—for another novelty in these French Elementary Schools for girls, is that the Directress always has her private room or office, in which she keeps the school-papers, attends to school-business, and receives parents and other visitors.

One morning in the week, we were told, was regularly devoted to receiving parents, and there is, I believe, in connection with every Elementary School in Paris a Comité Scolaire, or voluntary committee, which co-operates with the head-teachers in visiting parents, in looking up cases of sickness or distress, admonishing cases of neglect, and investigating cases of complaint.

The Directress at the Rue Lacordaire gave a sad account of the terrible poverty that surrounded her; but so neat and self-respecting was the outward appearance of her pupils that they compared quite favourably with the school we had just left. Indeed, the standard of instruction seemed to be just as good, except that here I saw no pupils above the age of twelve. I was delighted with the cordial relations that evidently existed between the various members of the staff, and delighted, too, with the kind and sympathetic reception we ourselves met with. Indeed, in some respects, and taking into consideration the character of the surroundings, this school in the Rue Lacordaire seemed to me one of the best Elementary Schools I have ever seen anywhere.

I was especially struck with the specimens of needlework that were shown to me, some of which I was permitted to carry off. The cleanliness and finish would have been admirable in any school, and in the samplers,



which the pupils are allowed to make during one term in each year, there was a display of taste and a delicacy of manipulation which impressed me much. The school course in needle-work concludes with learning to cut out and to put together a simple dress-bodice, fitting it on to a miniature bust provided for the purpose. I also carried off a specimen of a copy-book, with the neat portfolio in which the *cahier unique*, or single copy-book, used in most French Elementary Schools is kept. The one book serves for every exercise that is done in writing, a plan which would not answer where the subjects are more numerous, but which is very well suited to Primary work. A more interesting book is the *cahier mensuel*, or monthly copy-book, which is intended to be a record of the pupil's progress throughout her school-life. Once a month the exercise for the day, sums, copy, dictation, history, or whatever it may be, is done in the *cahier mensuel*. The page is then signed and dated, and the book put away for another month. Every one will understand the value of such a record as a register of progress.<sup>1</sup> As an illustration of the manner in which it is intended to be used, I will give a short extract from the "Recommendations addressed to the pupil," which are printed inside the cover.

Child, this book is delivered to you to be the companion and the witness of your work during the whole time that you are to pass at school. . . . See to it that hereafter you may be able to look over this abridgment of your school-life without a blush. To do this you need not be one of the foremost pupils; the precise advantage of this copy-book is that its aim is not to make a comparison between you and your school-fellows, but to compare you with your successive self. The question is not whether you are more intelligent, cleverer, better informed than this or that pupil, but whether each year, each month, you have improved upon yourself. . . . Child, think besides of this; we do not

work for ourselves alone in this world, we work for others also. Even children, without thinking of it, work for their country. For good scholars grow up into good citizens. If you employ your young years wisely, if you put to serious use all the means of instruction that the Republic takes care to offer to all her children, you may one day give back to your country that which your country is now doing for you. France needs industrious and good people; you may be one of these if you begin to prepare for it now. Do not waste your time, for you have no right to do so. The idle scholar does a wrong to himself no doubt, but above all he does a wrong to his country. If you are passing through some moment of weakness or discouragement, do not allow yourself to be cast down. Say, rather, silently in your own heart: No, I will not be one of the useless ones of the earth, ungrateful to my family, ungrateful to France. *I will work, I will improve, and that not only because it is my interest, but because it is my duty.*

This is also an instance of that constant appeal to patriotic motives which seems to pervade French education. I believe such motives do actually count for a great deal in producing the high average of regular attendance which is so noticeable in the Elementary Schools of France, though no doubt Mr. Fitch is right in pointing out the marked effect in this direction of the *livret*, or fortnightly report to the parents, and the *brevet d'études primaires*, or leaving-certificate.

The regular keeping of the *cahier mensuel* is, of course, a pretty severe test, and I was not surprised to learn that there are teachers who regard it with disfavour. The Directress of the Rue Lacordaire was not one of these. She willingly allowed me to look through the monthly copy-books of an entire class, but, indeed, the way in which they were kept would have been a credit to any school. And this was in a district so poor, that it can only be compared to those unhappy quarters in our own towns, where whole generations of charitable effort seem, as it were, to be swallowed up in a sea of poverty and to leave no trace, except in momentary relief to indi-

<sup>1</sup> An exercise-book of a similar character, for use in English schools, is being published by Allman and Son.

viduals. Paris is not so large as London, and the outward signs of squalor and misery seemed less apparent; but the Directress said to me that, if I had time, she could have taken me to scenes within a few minutes' walk that would have made my heart ache. It was a comfort to remember that there was a *cantine*, so that, if many of the children that I saw before me had come to school hungry, they would at any rate not go home unfed.

But more than that, I could not help feeling that the very existence of such well-built and well-provided school-buildings must have a civilising and uplifting influence. Nothing seemed neglected that could make both the pupils and teachers take a pleasure and a pride in their school; and to the very poor how few things there are in which they can take either pride or pleasure. Everything was in perfect repair and scrupulously clean; none of the proper school-appliances were wanting. I even observed that here, as in the other Primary Schools visited by me, there was in one of the class-rooms a bookcase containing a small educational library of all such books as the teaching-staff were at all likely to want to consult.

The next day M. Martel was good enough to conduct us himself to the École Sophie Germain, the only École Primaire Supérieure, or Higher-Grade School for Girls, in Paris. In France the two grades of Elementary instruction are distinctly recognised and provided for. There are, first, the children of parents who cannot as a rule afford to prolong the period of school-education beyond the age of thirteen, and who very often withdraw both boys and girls in order that they may begin to earn their own living at the moment they can legally do so. There are, secondly, the children of parents who can afford to keep their children at school, and are ready to make sacrifices to do so, up to the age of fifteen or even sixteen. For these the Higher Grade School is intended, offering a three years course which begins

after the certificate of Primary Studies has been obtained.

The École Sophie Germain,—like the Lycées the Higher Grade School has a special name of its own—was installed in quarters as spacious and suitable as any London High School, though externally there was nothing at all remarkable about them, except that the Directress's private room was larger and handsomer than we had seen before. It contained what, at first, looked to me like a great many book-shelves, but I soon observed that upon these shelves were ranged, not books, but a monotonous array of brown-backed portfolios each representing a record of some pupil's work, specimens, papers, &c. The Directress received us with great kindness and cordiality and was anxious to let us see and hear as much as possible, but expressed much regret that we could not hear any lessons given for it was a "day of interrogatories." "We do something of the kind about once a month," she explained. But to be present at these interrogatories was in itself something new, and we were soon seated in a class-room where a simple *voir dire* examination on physiology was going on, physiology, be it observed, of the simplest and most practical kind. One of the pupils was called up to the blackboard and very readily drew a simple diagram with red and blue chalk showing the circulation of the blood. It was clear that the child quite understood what she was about; she even succeeded in bringing out a clear answer to a question intended to elicit the connection between fresh air and a healthful circulation; and then she completely lost her head, she coloured, the tears came into her eyes, she made random shots; and a second pupil whom the teacher called up was equally confused, though she too showed knowledge. "And they are two of my best," murmured the teacher in a voice of disappointment. "But it is very easy to see that they are frightened," I could not help saying,—and frightened they certainly were. I believe it was the

presence of that awful personage the Inspecteur Générale, or else it was his presence and that of the foreign lady combined. He seemed one of the kindest of men, and I do not think he was their own particular Inspector; but certainly both children and teachers were nervous on that occasion, though as a rule I used to wonder at the presence of mind with which quite long replies would be given. For instance, I have seen a child work a sum on the blackboard, explaining every step of the process as she went on without the slightest embarrassment.

Nor was there any embarrassment in the next class that we entered, where an interrogatory on geography was in progress. The method was so new to me that I think I must describe it, just adding that the Directress expressed great regret that we could not hear a geography lesson given, because the lady who taught that subject was a specially able person. Well, she had a note-book containing sketches of the lessons given during the last term, and from these she had written headings on a number of slips of paper. Each pupil drew one of these slips by lot and had to be ready to treat the subject marked upon it. Thus one pupil had drawn "the Rhine," and was required to sketch the course of the Rhine on the blackboard, marking the principal tributaries, and naming the most important towns. Another had "the Vineyards of France," and upon a blank map that hung against the wall, she rapidly pointed out the vine-growing districts. A third had "Lace and paper," which was treated in the same way. The *carte muette* is in constant use in French schools, and I think there was always a blank map of France, and another of the world, in every class-room that I entered. The outlines are indicated by the use of different shades of black and grey, and the staring white outlines which make no difference between land and sea are avoided.

At the top of the building was a

very large studio lighted from the roof, in which a drawing-lesson was going forward. In another part of the same room I noticed several rows of light oblong tables. These I was told were for lessons in cutting out, as the elements of plain dressmaking form part of the school-course. Just as we were taking our leave I noticed quite a company of little girls rubbing away at a glazed partition, which, I was told, belonged to the *préau*. "Oh no!" was the reply to my inquiries, "We don't depend upon the pupils for the care of the building. What you see is a lesson in domestic economy; they are learning to clean windows."

Pupils come from far and near to the École Sophie Germain. It is an excellent school, and full to overflowing, and I have no doubt that ere long Paris will possess other schools of the same kind, but never very many, never so many as if the Écoles Professionnelles, or Technical Schools for Girls, had not been devised. Of these there are now six in Paris, and the one that I visited contained two hundred and fifty pupils. There will always be a large number of parents who desire for their girls exactly what the École Primaire Supérieure offers, — a better general education than can possibly be attained by those who have to leave school at thirteen; but there is a far larger class for whom better professional training in technical work is an all-important advantage. Indeed, there is nothing to prevent Higher Grade pupils from going on to an École Professionnelle, and they often do, though generally speaking the pupils of the École Professionnelle come straight from the Primary Schools; it is however, a condition of admission that pupils must either bring with them their *brevet d'études primaires* or must pass an entrance examination of equivalent difficulty.

The full title of the School is L'École Professionnelle Ménagère, and a certain course of fundamental training in the elements of domestic usefulness is required from all. Afterwards the pupils specialise, each

devoting herself entirely to some chosen profession, either laundry-work, dressmaking, embroidery, millinery, or cookery. Skill in embroidery is a special aptitude in many French women, and the cultivation and improvement of national or local gifts for any particular kind of work is a distinct aim of the training given in the *Écoles Professionnelles*.

The first thing I noticed in the waiting-room into which we were shown was a very elegant black cashmere dress, beautifully embroidered in black silk and beads. The pattern had been designed, and the work executed, in the school. And of course this dress was an "order," for the *École Professionnelle* executes many orders, but only for ladies who do not mind waiting two or three months for a dress and will allow the ceremony of "trying on" to be treated as a lesson either given or received. The elements of the art are, however, taught on busts mounted on stands.

I do not know if we were fortunate or unlucky in chancing upon a day when neither dressmaking nor embroidery was in actual progress, because almost all the pupils were engaged in a drawing-lesson, but it was a drawing-lesson of a kind that I never saw before, where everything that was being done had a strictly practical application. The embroiderers were either designing patterns, or learning to paint flowers and butterflies with a special view to the requirements of their art. On one table lay a case of butterflies from which the students selected for themselves. A much larger number of the pupils were engaged in drawing and painting costumes and millinery from models specially composed by some of the elder pupils. There were at least a dozen miniature busts mounted on stands about two feet high, each of which supported a fashionable costume designed and made up in the right materials, and in the most exact and complete manner. On other stands were knots of ribbon, bonnets, and other specimens

of millinery. The beginners made their drawings in pencil, but as they improved they were promoted to the use of colour.

In the spacious kitchen to which we were afterwards conducted, a substantial mid-day meal was being prepared consisting of a good plain soup, roast meat, and haricot beans. For this each pupil pays twenty-five *centimes*, except that there are certain holders of scholarships who pay nothing at all. In a smaller kitchen, or class-room, a little group of eight pupils were receiving a lesson in more advanced cookery, and at the moment of our visit were in the act of learning to make a *mayonnaise*. These pupils learn not only the art of cooking, but the business of marketing. A certain sum is allotted for the week's work, and they themselves buy all the materials they need, and are taught how to lay out the money to the best advantage.

I believe the school we visited was the first of the *Écoles Professionnelles* started in Paris. The Directress told us how it originated in two rooms, attached to one of the Elementary Schools as a sort of technical department, and how the work prospered and developed itself, and was becoming every day more valued and more appreciated. But no pupil is received who has not already acquired something like a solid foundation of Elementary knowledge; technical instruction is to supplement, not to supplant the general training of the intelligence in the Primary or Higher Grade Schools. In the Higher Grade Schools, indeed, a little technical training is actually given, but until the certificate of Primary studies has been attained, nothing of the kind is attempted, beyond elementary instruction in needlework.

This sketch, brief as it is, would be incomplete without a few words upon that most important of all subjects, religious instruction, which the unhappy operation of religious and political jealousies excludes from the school-programme,—not, alas, in France only!

"It was desired," writes M. Martel, "that the schools imposed upon children of all religions should, in the religious point of view, be neuter, and, without, however, excluding from the programme of instruction in morality, the study of our duty towards God, it was decided that the religious instruction should in future be given by the minister of each form of worship outside the school-buildings. To this intent the law of March the 28th, 1882, has decreed that all public Elementary Schools are to be closed one day in every week besides Sunday." (*Legislation et Réglementation de l'Enseignement Primaire*, 1878-88.)

The Saturday holiday, or half-holiday, seems to be a thing unknown in France, but in accordance with the above regulation every Thursday is regularly set apart as the day of religious instruction, with the intention of affording full opportunity for sending the children to be catechised in the various churches, and the fact that I heard this day commonly spoken of as the *jour du catéchisme* seemed to show that instruction of this kind is actually given, and regularly attended. I regret that it did not come in my way to be present, so that I can give no report of the method and character of the teaching. I suppose only a practical teacher can be fully aware of the almost complete uselessness of catechetical instruction that is given to large and miscellaneous masses of children; while, if the teaching is to be solely in the hands of the clergy, it is difficult to see how this evil can be avoided and the pupils separated into groups according to age and intelligence. There are other criticisms that suggest themselves to my mind, but I prefer to dwell upon the consideration whether, things being as they are in France, any better system can be shown to be possible just now. The duty of providing for religious instruction is certainly recognised, and this is a point of far higher importance than the adequacy or inadequacy of the present plan. In my own

opinion it is a very inadequate arrangement, but I do see in it one advantage which may, perhaps, have far-reaching consequences. It does throw back upon the parents that main and chief responsibility for their children's religious training which unquestionably belongs to them. It is much more upon the home than upon the school that the question really depends whether boys and girls are to be brought up to act upon religious principles and duly grounded in the elements of Christian faith and duty; and anything that tends to make parents feel this more deeply may lead to much good.

The chief point, indeed, in which the French system of Elementary Education struck me as distinctly superior to our own, is that it is so much better in touch with the parents. There is a constant endeavour to keep them acquainted with the conduct and progress of their children. It is taken for granted that their interest and co-operation may be relied upon; the laws relating to compulsory attendance are carefully explained to them; the manner in which these laws are carried out appears to be far less vexatious than it is with us; the school-course is not so rigidly tabulated, and the items are not calculated at a monetary value, but every parent can clearly understand the connection between regular attendance and the *brevet d'études primaires* which it is so important that his child should obtain; if there is anything he does not understand it is easy to ask for an explanation, for every head-master or head-mistress has a regularly appointed time for receiving visits from parents.

And here, for the present, I must break off, only begging my readers to remember that this sketch has no pretensions to any higher authority than that of a simple record of the impressions of a very short, though very interesting, educational journey.

M. E. SANDFORD.

## A LIGHT O' CARGLEN.

I HAVE elsewhere told that in our parish of Carglen, big though it was, we could not boast of a single village worthy of the name. We had, however, a few scattered hamlets. One of these clusters of thatched houses, all plain and venerable, was found at a cosy spot in a grassy hollow where the two main roads crossed each other, the first and widest being always spoken of as the toll-road; the second, rougher and less frequented, as the road of Baldearie. A little window in the gable of the country post-office looked out upon the former, and a big front window on the latter. The office itself was the glory and honour of the hamlet, which bore a name that can neither be called pretty nor appropriate. It was known to natives as Rottenslough, and to others as Rottenslough in Carglen. Its inhabitants were few, and they may be described in one or two brief sentences. First came the joint masters of the post-office, John and Eppie Eunie, who, in addition to looking after our letters, supplied coffins for the bodies of old parishioners who had passed away,—by gracious providence every one seemed to live to a ripe age. Then Saunders Grant, the shepherd, had his dwelling here, though he kept sheep on the hills of Drumean. Johnny Mathieson, with a small family, had gravitated to Rottenslough when "the cauld soil o' Pittiewake fairm" had taken health from his body, and most of the money from his purse. Maggie Lyon, whose red hair was never kempt and who lived God knows how, was the terror of the few neighbours; and, lastly, old Elsie Morris and her daft son Jock dwelt alone in the prettiest little house in the hamlet. These were the folks, and none of them attained to the first rank of fame among us. But there

was an adjunct to the hamlet about one hundred yards off, and a great man ruled in it. Rising from the corner of John Eunie's big fruit-garden, round which a row of tall poplar trees stood solemn sentinel, a narrow footpath left the toll-road and wound upwards through broom and fern, till on the top of the brae it straggled into the railway-station of Carglen. The approach for horses and carriages was by a different road and a different angle, needless here to describe. When the little footpath had thrown you, as it were, on to the platform, you saw houses indeed and a strip of rail, but, save and except the clamour of an occasional slow-crawling train, there was neither sound nor sign of life. Yet somewhere in the recesses of the place three stalwart men might have been found; two of them slow of body and slower of mind, but a third as nimble in body as he was keen in intellect. This was the Station-Master, one of the lights o' Carglen.

In the station everything was plain and simple. There was no beauty, unless we may call the sloping bank in front of the Master's house beautiful, for it was covered with the greenest grass, and sweet flowering shrubs shed a fragrance which filled the little rooms with a constant perfume. Nothing startling, scarcely anything dramatic, appeared; but yet from time to time a rich store of interest was found for those who had eyes to see and ears to hear. First of all there was the Master, Peter Wilkins Grant. He always signed his name in full, and had more than once spoken of himself as "I, Peter Wilkins Grant," rolling out the words as if there were something magical in them. But all Carglen knew him simply as "P. W.": "Gude e'en,



P. W.;" "Gie's a return, P. W.;" "Are the nowt in, P. W.?" "Gie't tae the Gohvermint, P. W.," were some of the many expressions that rang about our ears as we sat, by parish right (no privilege dreamed of there!), in the little booking-office. It is meet and fitting that we should see P. W. in his little domain, and hear him discourse, but first it may be well to tell something of the man.

P. W., then, was a pillar of the Free Kirk. Sunday after Sunday his small lean face arose from the depths of an enormous pew in the middle of the plain rough building, and a pair of big black eyes were set steadily on the figure of the Reverend Merrison Dean as he thundered the terrors of the Law and all the Prophets from a tiny pulpit that hung like a cage from the roof. This pulpit, by the way, tickled the fancy of a budding artist from the town of Eilfin, and he produced a wonderful piece of work, wherein the pulpit was turned to a cradle, and the grim black preacher to a fearsome child with a terrible head looking out upon the audience. But, to tell the truth, the pious man in the energy of his eloquent soul played sad pranks in that little cage, and short of an actual somersault there were few attitudes in which he might not have been seen. But P. W. had an eye for every gesture, an ear for every word, and (worst of all!) a black, greasy note-book in which terrible entries were made against the Free Kirk pastor. Picture the terrors of the man's soul as he looked into those fierce sharp eyes just as he reached the penultimate clause of a polished sentence, and saw the pencil at work in that tell-tale book. It was a stern ordeal, but the Minister bore it well; and I have seen him stop in the middle of a little argument, take three pinches of snuff between finger and thumb from his waistcoat-pocket, and, in the spirit of chivalry, allow time to the recording angel to make a point against him. When the service was over, P. W. would run home (he was

always a man in a hurry), and then set to work upon the damning note-book. Ay, you might see him at it far into the Sunday afternoon 'if you chanced to pass over the bridge and look down into his window. It was labour for God, and he stood to it far more lustily than he did on week-days to his earthly work for the company that he served. What was the object of all this careful toil? Ah! Maister Merrison Dean could have told. The object of it all was the good of the Minister's soul, and his guidance in the right pastoral path. P. W. knew what he was about, and, so sure as the warm sun shone in the sweet summer sky, if our parish had been sufficiently civilized to call for its own local paper, a powerful letter would have appeared weekly in it, dealing with ministerial failings in a certain place "not a hundred miles frae hereawa." But we had no newspaper save the *Blankshire*, and P. W. was afraid to approach its sublime majesty. Yet the great resource of letter-writing remained. Here was a way still open for P. W. to serve God; and he buckled to it with a right good heart. Week after week Robbie, the "post," handed in at the door of the grey manse by Whiteydeil burn epistles recording in plain black and white the word of the Lord by the mouth of P. W. against the lukewarm Merrison Dean. P. W. not only held the mirror up to nature with wonderful fidelity, but he added vivid touches of his own. Sometimes he would sign himself "A True Friend"; at others "Listener"; at others "A Voice"; sometimes "A Sorrowing Brother"; and on rare occasions he would write in his own name, "Peter Wilkins Grant." The poor Minister was held in a cleft stick. The more P. W. wrote, the more he subscribed to the funds of the Kirk, and the parson dared not openly quarrel with a man who denied himself butter with his bread for the good of the earthly Zion. But even the patience of the Reverend Merrison Dean (it was a long and sore-tried patience) at length became exhausted,

and one gloomy Sunday, after P. W. had indited an epistle containing words far different from those of which the Psalm speaks as "good matter in a song,"—words, in sober truth, gravely calling in question the soundness in the faith of no less a man than Smith Amos Gibb,—words even daring to reflect upon that good man's way of life,—the Minister mounted the pulpit, read a few of those terrible verses in which the Psalmist invokes curses upon the heads of his enemies; prayed sadly (without taking snuff even once) for self-deluded Pharisees and whited sepulchres; and, when the time for the sermon came, he seemed to stand up in the exalted pulpit-cage at least six inches taller than usual, as he gave out the text from John xxi. 22: "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." I shall never forget the strange look that came over the face of P. W. after he had carefully compared this passage in the fourth Gospel with its context. It was the one and only time within my knowledge in which P. W. lost his wits. The recording pencil fell from his hands, and rolled from under the pew down the passage towards the pulpit, and I would swear that a faint smile curled about the preacher's grim lips as he saw it, calling out for the fourth time, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Mr. Merrison Dean fairly excelled himself on that inspired Sunday. He smote the Bible almost into tatters; he spread out his arms and leaped upon the desk like a man bent on swimming over our heads; then he shot back featureless and lifeless as Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt; but ever and again he sank forward, and wound up his impassioned paragraphs with the pointed refrain, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me!" Every Carglener in the Free Kirk knew what it all meant, and there were few folks asleep. P. W.'s face was as white as the driven snow, for he felt that three-score eyes were upon him all gleaming with pleasure at the Minister's triumph. P. W. was silenced

for four long weeks, but he passed the time in praying for the Minister's spiritual condition, alternated with terrible harangues to the men who served under him at the little station on the unpardonable sin of those who "Kent the truth but didna walk in it."

P. W. had an eye to most folks in the parish, but after the Minister, there was one person whom he persecuted with relentless attention. This was the wife of Mungo Stennis, tenant of the farm Links o' Dornie. Mrs. Stennis had a tongue, and she wagged it freely. The little woman was not above criticism, and there was a rumour in the parish that copious doses of brandy increased the acidity of her temper and disposition. Now any one in Carglen who had recourse to the brandy-bottle, be it man or woman, had immediate sentence passed upon him. Whisky was a homely, harmless liquor, but we all said with honest poet Burns:

Wae worth that brandy, burning trash,  
Fell source o' mony a pain an' brash!

And P. W. led the attack in his wonted manner. Letters began to arrive at the Links time after time; at first from "A Parishioner," setting forth the heinous sin of brandy-drinking and backbiting. Then "A Sorrowing Brother" drew pictures of a drunkard's sad condition in terms as pathetic, if not so polished, as the confessions of the immortal Elia. No effect being produced, "A Disgusted Fellow-worshipper" poured forth the vials of his wrath, like a modern Hosea, against the sinful drinker. But still the brandy-bibber kept quiet. P. W. was not to be beaten, however, and he adopted the vein satirical. That is to say, he went to the town of Kail, purchased a small keg of brandy, and ostentatiously sent it with "the Christian compliments of Peter Wilkins Grant to Mrs. Mungo Stennis." Then he went into his room and prayed that the arrow might reach her heart. But Mrs. Stennis was equal to the occasion, and she wrote a

letter to P. W. thanking him heartily for his present. "I had often heard of your skill as a judge of good brandy. It is a gift that comes of long experience and some taste, and I am indebted to you," said she in her grand way. P. W. a brandy-drinker! This was too much. "Lord rebuke the enemy," cried he, and hurried off to the lawyer in Kail. He was "Real slanderit, he was, and he wud hae the law o' her, the dirty drunken woman he had tried to save; ay, it wud be a Coort o' Sessions job, that wud it—" but the lawyer altered his mind. So P. W. neither prayed nor wrote any more, but spoke of some who were "Far, far gone,—dry sticks,—mere brands for the burnin'."

P. W. was an "aawthor," a man who had written a book, or, at any rate, a small pamphlet in "prentit letters," and after that event you may be sure his praises were in every mouth in Carglen. No one had done such a thing within the memory of the oldest inhabitant, not even a former Minister's son, he who had made "siccan a name up in Lunnon as a newspaper chiel," and had been described by no less a man than Francie Kemp as "A real carl o' geniwi, but whether limb o' Sahtan or freak o' nature, God kens." P. W. was a man with a theory, and notwithstanding the vogue that he obtained, had, like most men weightied with theories, an uphill battle to fight. His book was entitled *Newspapers against Rugs; an Argument and a Plea*. We read it at first with awe and admiration, the more readily as P. W. treated us all to free copies. But the glamour passed away, and we were free to criticise. Then a veritable spate broke over the head of Peter Wilkins Grant, Author and Station-Master. P. W.'s book, with its argument and plea, was intended to prove to all the world that thick travelling-rugs or even greatcoats were mere useless burdens to any traveller, when he could wrap his legs, his body, and his head-piece in the *Blankshire Journal*, the *Eilfin*

*Chronicle*, or the *Aberdeen Twopenny*. P. W. firmly believed in the reign of Saints on the earth, and the immediate dawn of the Millennium, and he would say to a careless mortal, "Why think o' the body, man, when the soul is cauld and the Lord may this day be in the air!" But if one chanced in the dead of winter to appear in the station with a cosy rug, he would bounce forth and argue with fierce emphasis against the sin of those who despised the voice of wisdom, and trusted their bodies to woollen wraps instead of folds of newspaper. One day he tackled the Laird. Mr. Malcolm Seth was going to Edinburgh, and he carried a big rug. P. W. rushed out, thrust under the Laird's nose a copy of his book, and held in readiness a packet of newspapers. The Laird took the book, glanced at it, and P. W. stood prepared to argue the question. Mr. Seth looked at him pitifully through his glittering spectacles for a few seconds, and then muttering "*Cui bono?*" in his thin rasping voice, turned his back and walked away. P. W. spent the afternoon in interceding for the Laird. But it was Pete McQueban and the Elder of Gelnabreich who fairly demolished the writer's theory; so far at least as our parish was concerned. It was the morning of the market-day, and the little office was full. P. W., with his left foot on the edge of a chair and his right hand resting on the big station-bell, held forth upon the merits of the theory.

Then said Pete, "P. W., were ye iver fu'?"

"Fu'!" bawled the Station-Master; "what does the man take me for?"

"Weel, dae ye drink?" added Pete mildly.

"He's a cauld-water man," said one.

"Aweel," continued Pete, "if that be sae, hoo can the chiel tell ye what's warm an' what's nae. John Barley-corn against it a', say I. Try it, P. W.," he added, "an' then we can hae your opinion."

Hereat everybody laughed, but P. W. looked serious.

"Haith and there's truth in that, Pete," said Gelnies the Elder, who, though a sober douce man, was yet proprietor of more than one hotel in Kail. The Elder's word settled it, so that "Aye, aye!" chimed from a score of voices. Francie Kemp, the politician, was there, and as he only glared furiously and spat thrice, he too was taken as tendering assent.

P. W. was in the habit of summoning little conferences in the waiting-room to discuss serious questions of politics on week-days, and knotty religious arguments on the Sundays. At some of these meetings I was present, but the cosier warmth of the furnace bench in the Smiddy of Tap-the-Neuk where Smith Amos Gibb reigned had higher attractions. Besides P. W. *would* have his own way; failing that, there was danger of damaged tempers and broken heads. He was willing, yea anxious even unto bending the knee, to argue the point with you; but the moment you tackled him and endeavoured to give a Roland for his Oliver, his blood was up, and he fairly hissed at you in his sharp clear voice.

"Speak saft, freen P. W.," said Andrew from Claypots one day, mildly.

"Speak saft, said the man?" yelled P. W. in high squeaking tones. "I'll speak the truth,—the truth, I tell you," roared he, leaning forward and holding out a clenched fist which would certainly have found a lodgment in Andrew's left eye, had not Jock Watt of the Knowhead seized the Station-Master's coat-tails and pinned him to his seat. P. W. had wonderful energy, and there were times such as this, when, if he failed in reaching the inward man, he made rough onslaughts upon the outward. On Sunday he would prove from chapter and verse in Holy Scripture that all human things were worthless, and human laws and human governments of no avail, "For He wud be in the clouds soon"; but on the Monday he would shake in your face the *Red Republican* (printed in Young's Corner, Strand, London), and demonstrate with unerr-

ing logic that the Parliament Houses were rotten, the Monarchy a blood-sucker, and that England must be saved, and saved at once, by the creation of a strong Republic. No single soul agreed with him, but all stood in awe at the big words of controversy that came from his mouth. "He's a real blethering skate," said Sandie o' the Tanzie; "but Lord! he sets yer bluid a-gallopin', and it does ye muckle guid in the stamack." That was the secret of P. W.'s influence over us; he always succeeded in evoking a strong counter current of ideas, and by stirring the sluggish mind was a kind of parish doctor. "He's a damned cliver fallow is P. W., setting a-bye his prayers an' that," said graceless Pete McQueben, and we all thought the saying was true. Judge, therefore, of the comfort that stole into our souls when we found that our inbred conservatism in laws, morals, and religion was never rudely shaken, even by the searching criticisms of such an one as P. W.

I remember the downfall of P. W. in Carglen. It was just before I left it for the first time, and it came upon the occasion of one of those Monday night gatherings in the little waiting-room at the station by Rottenslough. Political questions were in the air, and many of them concerned in no inconsiderable degree the toiling peasantry of our parish. Most of us swore by "Wullie," and we fondly looked for great things from him. A few, a very few, draggie-tail folks were of the opposite persuasion. P. W. was against us all; he held firm to the faith of the *Red Republican*, and that meant the wreck of all old jog-trot methods. Flourishing the newspaper in his hand, now rasping forth his long sentences and anon quoting from the anonymous Grub Street writer, P. W. was determined for once to carry the citadel of our understandings. But most providentially Francie Kemp was one of us. He sat in a snug corner by the fire blazing in a big grate, and any one looking at him

could see a queer malicious twinkle in his eye boding no good for P. W. The sly twinkle increased in brilliance as, in the midst of one of P. W.'s grand elongated sentences, Francie rose and interposed with, "May we licht the pipe, treen P. W.?"

This arrested P. W. at an awkward moment just as he grasped firmly the twisted newspaper with one hand, and was in the act of letting out fiercely with the other. For a few seconds he paused, and we nearly laughed outright; but P. W. said solemnly, "At your ain risk, Francie, at your ain risk."

"I se risk it," cried Francie, and he struck a light.

P. W. continued his oration, and Francie was soon enveloped in a cloud of smoke. "Ye'll bear me out that I have carried my point, freens," gasped P. W. as he wound up his peroration. Then he sat down and wiped the sweat from his brow.

Francie's eye beamed still brightly under his thick grey eyebrow. There was silence for a brief space, but all faces were turned to the "politeeshun" with the pipe in his cheek. We never knew how Francie might deal with us, so we had to be careful. But Andrew from Claypots then summoned his native courage, thrust his long beak nose out of a distant corner, cried, "Francie, may we hear *you*?" with a curious snuffle, and then collapsed into his previous security.

"A' in guid time," said Francie, as he pulled away at his pipe.

"Do ye daur contradic' me, Francie?" called P. W.

"We'll see," replied the politician, all unabashed.

"He'll be drooned in reek sune," cried a youngster from the back.

"Silence!" bawled P. W., who was in the chair; and, "Whist, ye brat," cried Francie in his accustomed phrase.

"I'm inclinit tae agree wi' you, P. W.," said Pete McQueben softly, thinking thus to "draw" the smoker.

"We'll see," added Francie with the air of one who knew what he was about.

"Ye're a real Radikle, Francie," cried P. W.

"Deil a bit," said Francie.

"Weel an' there noo!" clamoured a dozen startled folks, all of whom had sworn by Francie as a true "Radikle, fac as death."

"Nae a Radikle, Francie? I' God's name, what are ye then?" cried the Station-Master.

"We'll see," whispered Francie, still at his ease.

P. W. was annoyed, and assumed a devotional attitude with his eyes tightly closed.

"Let us pray!" shouted the impudent youngster. Thereupon the strong hand of Jock Watt from the Know-head was laid upon the youth's cravat (he wore no collar); the door was opened, and the ill-bred brat ejected. But there was no screen to the window; a chink appeared in the glass, and there this youth placed his ear to listen. Francie saw him, but like all great men he was accessible to flattery, and he said nothing.

"Oot wi't, man," said one, calling to Francie. Then the politician ceased smoking, held the long clay pipe between the finger and thumb of his left hand, grandly swept the air with his right, and said he to the Chairman, "What's yer name?"

"What's my name!" roared P. W. "Why, ye a' ken it weel—Peter Wilkins Grant."

"That's richt," added Francie, "though mayhap ye might hae shortenit it. Were ye born under the Queen?" he continued.

"Well, I was born up in Pittiviach," owned the Station-Master.

"That's the same thing," said Francie. "And ye still haud by the word o' the Lord?" he added.

"Ay, sure; what for no?" said P. W. "In His laws do I meditate day an' nicht."

"Vera weel," said the politician. Just think of the pious man who carried us all upon his shoulders as a daily religious burden, being talked to like this! "An' ye're on the side o'

the Creator?" continued the interlocutor, still showing that ill-boding twinkle in his eye.

"Tae Him do I look," said P. W.

"In a sinfu' an corrupt mind," said Francie.

"Sirfu' and corrupt!" said the Station-Master. "Tak' a heed, Francie; hoo say ye that!"

"For the guid o' yer soul that wull never die," said he.

P. W. now twirled in his chair and nearly foamed at the mouth. Poor man, he was smitten to the heart, for had he not prayed constantly for Francie, as for us all, seven times a day like Daniel of old with face turned to Jerusalem?

"Freens," continued Francie, now rising from his chair and taking off reverently his broad blue bonnet, "Freens, it's a sad case. P. W. is as bad as Joe Forbes; he's a real awthiest."

"O Lord save us a'," cried twenty Cargleners, springing to their feet.

"An awthiest, Francie Kemp!" hissed the Station-Master. "Tak' a care, sir, there's law i' the land."

"Ay, ay, freen P. W., the *Queen's law*," said Francie calmly, and winking slyly at the same time to Andrew from Claypots. Then he went on: "The man's a rank awthiest, freens; far mair warse an awthiest than unbeleevin' Joe. 'Proof,' said ye, Andrew?" (winking again at the man from Claypots). "Oh ay, ye'se hae proofs. Gie's the bit paper, P. W."

It was sadly battered, torn, and twisted, but the Chairman gave it up. Francie was in no hurry, but you could almost have heard the beating of twenty hearts at this moment. The politician had great faith in himself, and he took a reasonable time to put on his spectacles. "Listen!" said he, and he read the damnable word "Atheism" from the title-page.

"Na noo, nae that!" pleaded Jock Watt from the Knowhead.

"It's in prent, fac as death," said Francie Kemp.

Then Jock arose, cast a sorrowful

glance at little P. W., and walked out. Andrew from the Claypots went next, looking grimly at the toes of his big boots. Then one by one the company followed like a flock of sheep. P. W. was left alone with Francie.

Then said the triumphant politician: "Man, yer a' wrang; tack aboot, an' stick tae Wullie. He's nae o' oor perswaashun, but the root o' the matter's in 'im." And then he too stalked solemnly out.

\* \* \* \* \*

P. W. when left alone took up the paper and glanced at the terrible word "Atheism" undoubtedly appearing thereon. Then he went to his house to thrash the matter out in supplication.

The fame of this night spread through the parish like wildfire, and Francie was ten times a hero now. In due course the news came to the ears of the Reverend Merrison Dean. The Minister's opportunity had come at last, and on the next Sabbath the good man ascended the pulpit, prayed in deep contrition for sinners and unbelievers and the heathen and the infidel, and when the sermon was reached gave out his text, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

Every eye was focused on P. W., who had the recording note-book in readiness. The preacher took three pinches of rappee, repeated his text, and then launched out into the sermon. A dozen sentences were sufficient! P. W. stood up in his pew, gathered all his effects together, put his Sabbath hat ostentatiously upon his head, and then with much dignity sailed to the door. He strode down the toll-road, across the burn by Whiteydell, and then up the brae to the "auld Kirk." One more unfortunate, rashly importunate, had gone to his death under the prosy locutions of the Reverend Saunders Macdonald. But he took his terrible note-book with him, and the Free Kirk Minister breathed a long and audible sigh of relief!

ALEXANDER GORDON.



## LORD BEAUPREY.

## PART III.

## V.

LORD BEAUPREY was able promptly to assure his accomplice that their little plot was working to a charm; it already made such a difference for the better. Only a week had elapsed, but he felt quite another man; his life was no longer spent in springing to arms and he had ceased to sleep in his boots. The ghost of his great fear was laid, he could do the things he liked and attend to his neglected affairs. The news had been a bomb in the enemy's camp, and there were plenty of blank faces to testify to the confusion it had wrought. Every one was taken in, and every one had hastened to congratulate him. Lottie Firminger only had written to him in terms of which no notice could be taken, though of course he expected, every time he came in, to find her waiting in his hall. Her mother was coming up to town, and he should have the family on his back; but, taking them as a single body, he could manage them, and that was a detail. The Ashburys had remained at Bosco till that establishment was favoured with the tidings that so nearly concerned it (they were communicated to Maud's mother by the housekeeper), and then the beautiful sufferer had found, in her defeat, strength to seek another asylum. The two ladies had departed for a destination unknown; he didn't think they had turned up in London. Guy Firminger averred that there were precious portable objects which he was sure he should miss on returning to his country home.

He came every day to Chester Street, and was evidently much less bored than Mary had prefigured by this needful concession to verisimilitude. It was amusement enough to see the progress of their comedy and

to invent new touches for some of its situations. The girl herself was amused; it was an opportunity like another for cleverness such as hers, and had much in common with private theatricals, especially with the rehearsals, the most amusing part. Moreover she was good-natured enough to be really pleased at the service it was impossible for her not to recognise that she had rendered. Each of the parties to this queer contract had anecdotes and suggestions for the other, and each reminded the other duly that they must, at every step, keep their story straight. Except for the exercise of this care Mary Gosselin found her duties less onerous than she had feared, and her part, in general, much more passive than active. It consisted indeed largely of murmuring thanks and smiling and looking happy and handsome; as well as perhaps also in saying, in answer to many questions, that nothing, as yet, was fixed, and of trying to remain humble when people expressed clearly that such a match was a wonder for such a girl. Her mother, on the other hand, was devotedly active. She treated the situation with private humour, but with public zeal, and, making it both real and ideal, told so many fibs about it that there were none left for Mary. The girl had failed to understand Mrs. Gosselin's interest in this elaborate pleasantry; the good lady had seen in it from the first more than she herself had been able to see. Mary performed her task mechanically, sceptically, but Mrs. Gosselin attacked hers with conviction, and had really the air at moments of thinking that their fiction was a fact. Mary allowed her as little of this attitude as possible and was ironical about her duplicity;

warnings which the elder lady received with gaiety until one day when repetition had made them act on her nerves. Then she begged her daughter, with sudden asperity, not to talk to her as if she were a fool. She had already had words with Hugh about some aspects of the affair,—so much as this was evident in Chester Street; a smothered discussion which, at the moment, had determined the poor boy to go to Paris with Boston-Brown. The young men came back together after Mary had been "engaged" three weeks, but she remained in ignorance of what passed between Hugh and his mother the night of his return. She had gone to the opera with Lady Whiteroy, after one of her invariable comments on Mrs. Gosselin's invariable remark that of course Guy Firminger would spend his evening in their box. The remedy for his trouble, Lord Beauprey's prospective bride had said, was surely worse than the disease; she was in perfect good faith when she wondered that his lordship's sacrifices, his laborious cultivation of appearances, should "pay".

Hugh Gosselin dined with his mother, and, at dinner, talked of Paris and of what he had seen and done there; he kept the conversation superficial, and after he had heard how his sister, at the moment, was occupied, asked no question that might have seemed to denote an interest in the success of the experiment for which, in going abroad, he had declined responsibility. His mother could not help observing that he never mentioned Guy Firminger by either of his names, and it struck her as a part of the same detachment that later, up stairs (she sat with him while he smoked), he should suddenly say, as he finished a cigar:

"I return to New York next week."

"Before your time? What for?"

Mrs. Gosselin was horrified.

"Oh, mamma, you know what for."

"Because you still resent poor Mary's good-nature?"

"I don't understand it, and I don't

like things I don't understand; therefore I'd rather not be here to see it. Besides, I really can't tell a pack of lies."

Mrs. Gosselin exclaimed and protested; she had arguments to prove that there was no call, at present, for the least deflection from the truth; all that any one had to reply, to any question (and there could be none that was embarrassing save the ostensible determination of the date of the marriage) was that nothing was settled as yet,—a form of words in which, for the life of her, she couldn't see any perjury. "Why, then, go in for anything in such bad taste, to culminate only in something so absurd?" Hugh demanded. "If the essential part of the matter can't be spoken of as fixed, nothing is fixed, the deception becomes transparent, and they give the whole idea away. It's child's play."

"That's why it's so innocent. All I can tell you is that practically their attitude answers; he's delighted with its success. Those dreadful women have given him up; they've already found some other victim."

"And how is it all to end, please?"

Mrs. Gosselin was silent a moment.

"Perhaps it won't end."

"Do you mean that the engagement will become real?"

Again the good lady said nothing until she broke out: "My dear boy, can't you trust your mother?"

"Is *that* your speculation? Is that Mary's? I never heard of anything so odious!" Hugh Gosselin cried. But she defended his sister with eagerness, with a gloss of coaxing, maternal indignation, declaring that Mary's disinterestedness was complete,—she had the perfect proof of it. Hugh was conscious, as he lighted another cigar, that the conversation was more fundamental than any that he had ever had with his mother, who, however, hung fire but for an instant when he asked her what this "perfect proof" might be. He didn't doubt of his sister, he admitted that; but the perfect

proof would make him less uncomfortable. It took, finally, the form of a confession from Mrs. Gosselin that the girl evidently liked,—well, greatly liked—Mr. Boston-Brown. Yes, the good lady had seen, for herself, at Bosco, that the smooth young American was making up to her and that, time and opportunity aiding, something might very well happen which could not be regarded as satisfactory. She had been very frank with Mary, had besought her not to commit herself to a suitor who, in the very nature of the case, couldn't meet some of their views. Mary, who pretended not to know what their "views" were, had denied that she was in danger; but Mrs. Gosselin had assured her that she had all the air of it, and had said, triumphantly: "Agree to what Lord Beauprey asks of you, and I'll believe you." Mary had wished to be believed,—so she had agreed. That was all the witchcraft any one had used.

Mrs. Gosselin out-talked her son, but there were two or three plain questions that he came back to; and the first of these bore upon the ground of her aversion to poor Boston-Brown. He told her again, as he had told her before, that his friend was that rare bird, a maker of money who was also a man of culture. He was a gentleman to his finger-tips, accomplished, capable, kind, with a charming mother and two lovely sisters (she should see them!) the sort of fellow, in short, whom it was folly to make light of.

"I believe it all, and if I had three daughters he should be very welcome to one of them."

"You might easily have had three daughters who wouldn't attract him at all. You've had the good fortune to have one who does, and I think you do wrong to interfere with it."

"My eggs are in one basket, then, and that's a reason the more for preferring Lord Beauprey," said Mrs. Gosselin.

"Then it *is* your calculation—!" stammered Hugh in dismay; on which

she coloured and requested that he would be a little ~~less~~ rough with his mother. She would rather part with him immediately, sad as that would be, than that he should attempt to undo what she had done. When Hugh replied that it was not to Mary, but to Beauprey himself, that he judged it important he should speak, she informed him that a rash remonstrance might do his sister a cruel wrong. Dear Guy was *most* attentive.

"If you mean that he really cares for her, there's the less excuse for his taking such a liberty with her. He's either in love with her or he isn't. If he is, let him make her a serious offer; if he isn't, let him leave her alone."

Mrs. Gosselin looked at her son with a kind of patient joy. "He's in love with her, but he doesn't know it."

"He ought to know it, and if he's so stupid I don't see that we ought to consider him."

"Don't worry,—he *shall* know it!"

Mrs. Gosselin cried; and, continuing to struggle with Hugh, she insisted on the delicacy of the situation. She made a certain impression on him, though on confused grounds; she spoke at one moment as if he was to forbear because the business was a mere fable that happened to contain a convenience for a distressed friend, and at another as if one ought to strain a point because there were great possibilities at stake. She was most lucid when she pictured the social position and other advantages of a peer of the realm. What had those of an American stockbroker, however amiable, to compare with them? She was inconsistent, but she was diplomatic, and the result of the discussion was that Hugh Gosselin became conscious of a dread of injuring his sister. He became conscious, at the same time, of a still greater apprehension, that of seeing her arrive at the agreeable in a tortuous, a second-rate manner. He might keep his peace to please his mother, but he couldn't enjoy it, and

he actually took his departure, travelling in company with Boston-Brown, who, of course, before going, waited on the ladies in Chester Street to thank them for the kindness they had shown him. It couldn't be kept from Guy Firminger that Hugh was not happy, though when they met, which was only once or twice before he quitted London, Mary Gosselin's brother flattered himself that he was too proud to show it. He had always liked old loafing Guy, and it was disagreeable to him not to like him now; but he was aware that he must either quarrel with him definitely or not at all, and that he had passed his word to his mother. Therefore his attitude was strictly negative; he took, with the parties to it, no notice whatever of the "engagement," and he couldn't help it if, to other people, he had the air of not being content. They doubtless thought him strangely fastidious. Perhaps he was; the tone of London struck him, in some respects, as very horrid; he had grown in a manner away from it. Mary was impenetrable; tender, gay, charming, but with no patience, as she said, for his premature flight. Except when Lord Beauprey was present you would not have dreamed that he existed for her. In his company,—he had to be present more or less of course—she was simply like any other English girl who disliked effusiveness. They had each the same manner, that of persons of rather a shy tradition who were on their guard against public "spooning." They practised their fraud with good taste, a good taste mystifying to Boston-Brown, who thought their precautions excessive. When he took leave of Mary Gosselin her eyes consented, for a moment, to look deep down into his. He had been from the first of the opinion that they were beautiful, and he was more mystified than ever.

If Guy Firminger had failed to ask Hugh Gosselin frankly if he had a fault to find with what they were doing, this was, in spite of old friendship, simply because he was too happy

now to care much whom he didn't please, to care at any rate for criticism. He had ceased to be critical himself, and his high prosperity could take his blamelessness for granted. His happiness would have been offensive if people generally hadn't liked him, for it consisted of a kind of monstrous candid comfort. To take all sorts of things for granted was still his great, his delightful characteristic; but it didn't prevent his showing imagination and tact and taste in particular circumstances. He made, in their little comedy, all the right jokes and none of the wrong ones; the girl had an acute sense that there were some jokes that would have been detestable. She gathered that it was universally supposed that she was having a brilliant season, and something of the glory of an enviable future seemed indeed to hang about her. People no doubt thought it odd that she didn't go about more with her future husband; but those who knew anything about her knew that she had never done exactly as other girls did. She had her own ways, her own freedoms and her own scruples. Certainly he made the London weeks much richer than they had ever been for a limited young person; he put more things into them, so that they became dense and complicated. This frightened her at moments, especially when she thought with compunction that she was deceiving her very friends. She didn't mind taking the vulgar world in, but there were people she hated not to let into the secret. She could let no one into it, of course, and indeed she would have been ashamed. There were hours when she wanted to stop,—she had such a dread of doing too much; hours when she thought with dismay that the fiction of the rupture was still to come, with its horrid train of new untrue things. She spoke of it repeatedly to her confederate, who only postponed and postponed, told her she would never dream of forsaking him so soon if she measured the good

she was doing him. She did measure it, however, when she met him in the great world ; she was of course always meeting him ; that was the only way appearances were kept up. There was a certain attitude she could allow him to take on these occasions ; it covered and carried off their subterfuge. He could talk to her unmolested ; for herself, she never spoke of anything but the charming girls, everywhere present, among whom he could freely choose. He didn't protest, because to choose freely was what he wanted, and they discussed these young ladies one by one. Some she recommended, some she disparaged, but it was almost the only subject she tolerated. It was her system in short, and she wondered he didn't get tired of it ; she was so tired of it herself.

She tried other things that she thought he might find wearisome, but his good-humour was proof. He was now really for the first time enjoying his promotion, his wealth, his insight into the terms on which the world offered itself to the happy few, and that made an element that muffled irritation. Once, at some glittering ball, he asked her if she should be jealous if he were to dance again with Lady Whiteroy, with whom he had danced already, and this was the only occasion on which he had come near making a joke of the wrong sort. She showed him what she thought of it and made him feel that the way to be forgiven was to spend the rest of the evening with that lovely creature. Now that the phalanx of the pressingly nubile was held in check, there was accordingly nothing to prevent his passing his time pleasantly. Before he had taken this effective way the manœuvring mother, when she spied him flirting with a married woman, felt that in urging a virgin daughter's superior claims she worked for righteousness as well as for the poor girl. But Mary Gosselin protected these scandals, practically, by the still greater scandal of her indifference ; so that he was in the odd position of

having waited to be bound to know what it was to be undisturbed. He had, in other words, the maximum of security with the minimum of privation. The lovely creatures of Lady Whiteroy's order thought Mary Gosselin charming, but they were the first to see through her falsity.

All this carried the young pair to the middle of July ; but nearly a month before that, one night under the summer stars, on the deck of the steamer that was to reach New York on the morrow, something had passed between Hugh Gosselin and his rather meditative American friend. The night was warm and splendid ; these were their last hours at sea, and Hugh, who had been playing whist in the cabin, came up, very late, to take an observation before turning in. It was in this way that he chanced on his companion, who was leaning over the stern of the ship and gazing off, beyond its phosphorescent track, at the muffled, moaning ocean, the backward darkness, everything he had relinquished. Hugh stood by him for a moment, then asked him what he was thinking about. Boston-Brown gave at first no answer, after which he turned round and, with his back against the guard of the deck, looked up at the multiplied stars. "He has it badly," Hugh Gosselin mentally commented. At last his friend replied : "About something you said yesterday."

"I forget what I said yesterday."

"You spoke of your sister's intended marriage ; it was the only time you had spoken of it. You seemed to intimate that it might not, after all, take place."

Hugh hesitated a little. "Well, it won't take place. They're not engaged, not really. This is a secret, an absolute secret. I wouldn't tell any one else ; but I'm willing to tell *you*. It may make a difference to you."

Boston-Brown turned his head ; he looked at Hugh a minute through the fresh darkness. "It does make a

difference to me. But I don't understand," he added.

"Neither do I. I don't like it. It's a pretence, a temporary make-believe, to help Beauprey."

"To help him?"

"He's so run after."

The young American stared, ejaculated, mused. "Oh, yes,—your mother told me."

"It's a sort of invention of my mother's, and of his (very absurd, I think), till he can see his way. Mary has agreed to see him through these first months. It's ridiculous, but I don't know that it hurts her."

"Oh!" said Boston-Brown.

"I don't know, either, that it does her any good."

"No!" said Boston-Brown. Then he added: "It's certainly very kind of her."

"It's a case of old friends," Hugh explained, inadequately, as he felt. "He has always been in and out of our house."

"But how will it end?"

"I haven't the least idea."

Boston-Brown was silent; he faced about to the stern again and stared at the rush of the ship. Then, shifting his position once more: "Won't the engagement, before they've done, turn into a real one?"

Hugh felt as if his mother were listening. "I doubt it much. If there were even a remote chance of that, Mary wouldn't have consented."

"But mayn't *he* easily find that—charming as she is—he's in love with her?"

"He's too much taken up with himself."

"That's just a reason," said Boston-Brown. "Love is selfish." He considered a moment longer, then he went on: "And mayn't *she* find—?"

"Find what?" said Hugh, as he hesitated.

"That she likes *him*, very much."

"She likes him of course, else she wouldn't have come to his assistance. But her certainty about herself must have been just what made her not

object to lending herself to the arrangement. She could do it decently because she doesn't seriously care for him. If she did—!" Hugh suddenly stopped.

"If she did?" his friend repeated.

"It would have been odious."

"I see," said Boston-Brown, gently.

"But how will they break off?"

"It will be Mary who'll break off."

"Perhaps he'll find it difficult."

"She'll require a pretext."

"I see," mused Boston-Brown shifting his position again.

"She'll find one," Hugh declared.

"I hope so," his companion responded.

For some minutes neither of them spoke; then at last Hugh asked, "Are you in love with her?"

"Oh, my dear fellow!" Boston-Brown wailed. He instantly added, "Will it be any use for me to go back?"

Again Hugh felt as if his mother were listening. But he answered, "Do go back."

"It's awfully strange," said Boston-Brown. "I'll go back."

"You had better wait a couple of months, you know."

"Mayn't I lose her, then?"

"No—she'll only get the more tired of it."

"I'll go back!" the American repeated, as if he hadn't heard. He was restless, agitated; he had evidently been much affected. He fidgeted away dimly, moved up the level length of the deck. Hugh Gosselin lingered longer at the stern; he fell into the attitude in which he had found the other, leaning over it and looking back at the great vague distance they had come. He thought of his mother.

## VI.

To remind her devoted mother of the vanity of certain expectations which she more than suspected her of entertaining, Mary Gosselin, while she felt herself intensely watched (it had



all brought about a horrid new situation at home), produced every day some fresh illustration of the fact that people were no longer a bit taken in. Moreover these illustrations were not invented; the girl believed in them, and when once she had begun to notice them she saw them multiply fast. Lady Whiteroy, for one, was distinctly suspicious; she had taken the liberty more than once of asking the future Lady Beauprey what in the world was the matter with her. Brilliant figure as she was, and occupied with her own pleasures, which were of a very independent nature, she had nevertheless constituted herself Miss Gosselin's very kind friend and patroness; she took a particular interest in her marriage, an interest all the greater as it rested not only on a freely-professed liking for her, but on a lively sympathy with the other party to the transaction. Lady Whiteroy, who was very pretty and very clever, and whom Mary secretly but profoundly mistrusted, delighted in them both, in short; so much so that Mary judged herself happy to be in a false position, so certain should she have been to be jealous had she been in a true one. This charming woman threw out inquiries that made the girl not care to meet her eyes; and Mary ended by forming a theory of the sort of marriage for Lord Beauprey that Lady Whiteroy would really have appreciated. It would have been a marriage to a fool, a marriage, say, to Charlotte Firminger. She would have her reasons for preferring that; and, as regarded the actual prospect, she had only discovered that Mary was even profounder than herself.

It will be understood how much our young lady was in the central current when I mention that in spite of this complicated consciousness she was one of the ornaments (Guy Firminger was of course another) of the party entertained by her gracious friend and Lord Whiteroy during the Goodwood week. She came back to town with the firm intention of putting an end

to a comedy which had more than ever become odious to her; in consequence of which she had, on this subject, with her fellow-comedian a scene,—the scene she had dreaded—half-pathetic, half-ridiculous. He appealed to her, wrestled with her, took his usual ground that she was saving his life without really lifting a finger. He denied that the public was not satisfied with their pretexts for postponement, their explanations of delay; what else was expected of a man who would wish to celebrate his nuptials on a suitable scale, but who had the misfortune to have had, one after another, three grievous bereavements? He promised not to molest her for the next three months, to go away till his "mourning" was over, to go abroad, to let her do as she liked. He wouldn't come near her, he wouldn't even write (no one would know it), if she would let him keep up the mere form of their fiction; and he would let her off the very first instant he definitely perceived that this expedient had ceased to be effective. She couldn't judge of that,—she must let him judge; and it was a matter in which she could surely trust to his honour.

Mary Gosselin trusted to it, but she insisted on his going away. When he took such a tone as that she couldn't help being moved; he breathed with such frank, charming lips on the irritation she had stored up against him. Guy Firminger went to Homburg, and if his confederate consented not to clip the slender thread by which this particular engagement still hung, she made short work with every other. A dozen invitations, for Cowes, for the country, for Scotland, beckoned her forward, made a pathway of flowers, but she withdrew from them all. When her mother, aghast, said to her, "What then will you do?" she replied in a very conclusive manner, "I'll go home!" Mrs. Gosselin was wise enough not to struggle; she saw that the thread was delicate, that it must dangle in quiet air. She

therefore travelled back with her daughter to homely Hampshire, feeling that they presented less appearance than they had done for many weeks. On the August afternoons they sat again on the little lawn on which Guy Firminger had found them the day he first became eloquent about the perils of the desirable young bachelor; and it was on this very spot that, toward the end of the month, and with some surprise, they beheld Mr. Boston-Brown once more approach. He had come back from America; he had arrived but a few days before; he was staying, of all places in the world, at the inn in the village.

His explanation of this anomaly was of all explanations the oddest; he had reappeared in England for the particular purpose of sketching. There was nothing more sketchable than the odds and ends of Hampshire, and he was so good as to include Mrs. Gosselin's charming premises, and even their charming occupants, in his artistic programme. He fell to work with all speed, with a sort of feverish eagerness; he seemed possessed indeed by an artistic frenzy. He sketched everything on the place, and when he had represented an object once he went straight at it again. His advent was soothing to Mary Gosselin, in spite of his nervous activity; it must be admitted, indeed, that at the moment he arrived she had already felt herself in quieter waters. The August afternoons, the relinquishment of London, the simplified life, had rendered her a service which, if she had freely qualified it, she would have described as a restoration of her self-respect. If poor Guy found any profit in such conditions as these, there was no great reason to gainsay him. She had so completely shaken off responsibility that she took scarcely more than a languid interest in the fact, communicated to her by Lady Whiteroy, that Charlotte Firminger had also, as the newspapers said, "proceeded" to Homburg. Lady Whiteroy knew, for Lady

Whiteroy had "proceeded" as well; her physician had discovered in her constitution a pressing need for such a step. She chronicled Charlotte's presence, and even to some extent her behaviour, among the fatigued and afflicted, but it was not till some time afterwards that Mary learned how Miss Firminger's pilgrimage had been made under her ladyship's protection. This was a further sign that, like Mrs. Gosselin, Lady Whiteroy had ceased to struggle; she had, in town, only shrugged her shoulders ambiguously on being informed that Lord Beauprey's intended was going down to her stupid home.

The fulness of Mrs. Gosselin's renunciation was apparent during the stay of the young American in the neighbourhood of that retreat. She occupied herself with her knitting, her garden and the cares of a punctilious hospitality, but she had no appearance of any other occupation. When people came to tea, Boston-Brown was always there, and she had the self-control to attempt to say nothing that could assuage their natural surprise. Mrs. Ashbury came one day with poor Maud, and the two elder ladies, as they had done more than once before, looked for some moments into each other's eyes. This time it was not a look of defiance, it was rather,—or it would have been for an observer completely in the secret—a look of invitation and of acceptance, a look of arrangement. There was, however, no one completely in the secret save perhaps Mary, and Mary didn't heed. The arrangement, at any rate, was ineffectual; Mrs. Gosselin might mutely say, over the young American's eager, talkative shoulders, "Yes, you may have him if you can get him;" the most rudimentary experiments demonstrated that he was not to be got. Nothing passed on this subject between Mary and her mother, whom the girl none the less knew to be holding her breath and continuing to watch. She counted it more and more as one

unpleasant result of her conspiracy with Guy Firminger that it almost poisoned a relation that had always been sweet. It was to show that she was independent of it that she did as she liked now, which was almost always as Boston-Brown liked. When in the first days of September,—it was in the warm, clear twilight, and they happened, amid the scent of fresh hay, to be leaning side by side on a stile—he told her more fully and particularly than he had done before what he had come back to England for, she of course made no allusion to a prior tie. On the other hand she insisted on his going up to London by the first train the next day. He was to wait,—that was distinctly understood—for his answer.

She desired, meanwhile, to write immediately to Guy Firminger, but as he had kept his promise of not irritating her with letters she was uncertain as to his actual whereabouts ; she was only sure he would have left Homburg. Lady Whiteroy had become silent, so there were no more sidelights, and she was on the point of telegraphing to London for an address when she received a telegram from Bosco. The proprietor of that seat had arrived there the day before, and he found he could make trains fit if she would, on the morrow, allow him to come over and see her for a day or two. He had returned sooner than their agreement allowed, but she answered "Come," and she showed his missive to her mother, who, at the sight of it, wept with strange passion. Mary said to her : "For heaven's sake, don't let him see you !" She lost no time ; she told him, on the morrow, as soon as he entered the house that she could accommodate him no further.

"All right,—it *is* no use," he answered : "they're at it again !"

"You see you've gained nothing !" she replied triumphantly. She had instantly recognised that he was different, how much had happened.

"I've gained some of the happiest days of my life."

"Oh, that was not what you tried for !"

"Indeed it was, and I got exactly what I wanted," said Guy Firminger. They were in the cool little drawing-room where the morning light was dim. Guy Firminger had a sunburnt appearance, as in England people returning from other countries are apt to have, and Mary thought he had never looked so well. It was odd, but it was noticeable, that he had grown much handsomer since he had become a personage. He paused a moment, smiling at her while her mysterious eyes rested on him, and then he added : "Nothing ever worked better. It's no use now,—people see ; but I've got a start. I wanted to turn round and look about, and I *have* turned round and looked about. There are things I've escaped. I'm afraid you'll never understand how deeply I'm indebted to you."

"Oh, it's all right," said Mary Gosselin.

There was another short silence ; after which he went on : "I've come back sooner than I promised, but only to be strictly fair. I began to see that we couldn't hold out and that it was my duty to let you off. From that moment I was bound to put an end to your situation. I might have done so by letter, but that seemed scarcely decent. It's all I came back for, and it's what I telegraphed to you for yesterday."

Mary hesitated an instant, she reflected intensely. What had happened, what would happen, was that, if she didn't take care, the signal for the end of their little arrangement would not have appeared to come from herself. She particularly wished it not to come from any one else, she had even a horror of that ; so that after an instant she hastened to say : "I was on the very point of telegraphing to you,—I was only waiting for your address."

"Telegraphing to me ?" He seemed rather blank.

"To tell you that our absurd affair really, this time, can't go on another

hour,—to put a complete stop to it."

"Oh!" said Guy Firminger.

"So it's all right."

"You've always hated it!" laughed Guy; and his laugh sounded slightly foolish to the girl.

"I found yesterday that I hated it more than ever."

Lord Beauprey showed a quickened attention. "For what reason—yesterday?"

"I would rather not tell you, please. Perhaps some time you'll find it out."

He continued to look at her, brightly and fixedly, with his confused cheerfulness. Then he said with a vague, courteous alacrity, "I see, I see!" She had an impression that he didn't see; but it didn't matter, she was nervous and quite preferred that he shouldn't. They both got up, and in a moment he exclaimed: "Well, I'm intensely sorry it's over! it has been so charming."

"You've been very good about it, I mean very reasonable," Mary said, to say something. Then she felt, in her nervousness, that this was just what she ought not to have said; it sounded ironical and provoking, whereas she had meant it as pure good-nature. "Of course you'll stay to luncheon?" she continued. She was bound in common hospitality to speak of that, and he answered that it would give him the greatest pleasure. After this her apprehension increased, and it was confirmed in particular by the manner in which he suddenly asked:

"By the way, what reason shall we give?"

"What reason?"

"For our rupture. Don't let us seem to have quarrelled."

"We can't help that," said Mary.

"Nothing else will account for our behaviour."

"Well, I sha'n't say anything about you."

"Do you mean you'll let people think it was you who were tired of it?"

"I mean I sha'n't blame you."

"You ought to behave as if you cared," said Mary.

Guy Firminger laughed, but he looked worried, and he evidently was puzzled. "You must act as if you had jilted me."

"You're not the sort of person, unfortunately, that people jilt."

Lord Beauprey appeared to accept this statement as incontestable; not with elation, however, but with candid regret, the slightly embarrassed recognition of a fundamental obstacle. "Well, it's no one's business, at any rate, is it?"

"No one's, and that's what I shall say if people question me. Besides," Mary added, "they'll see for themselves."

"What will they see?"

"I mean they'll understand. And now we had better join mamma."

It was his evident inclination to linger in the room after he had said this that gave her complete alarm. Mrs. Gosselin was in another room, in which she sat in the morning, and Mary moved in that direction, pausing only in the hall for him to accompany her. She wished to get him into the presence of a third person. In the hall he joined her, and in doing so he laid his hand gently on her arm. Then, looking into her eyes with all the pleasantness of his honesty, he said: "It will be very easy for me to appear to care,—for I *shall* care. I shall care immensely!" Lord Beauprey added smiling.

Anything, it struck her, was better than that,—than that he should say: "We'll keep on, if you like (*I should!*) only this time it will be serious. Hold me to it,—do; don't let me go; lead me on to the altar,—really!" Some such words as these, she believed, were rising to his lips, and she had an insurmountable horror of hearing them. It was as if, well enough meant on *his* part, they would do her a sort of dishonour, so that all her impulse was quickly to avert them. That was not the way she wanted to be asked in marriage. "Thank you very much,"

she said, "but it doesn't in the least matter. You will seem to have been jilted,—so it's all right!"

"All right! You mean—?" He hesitated, he had coloured a little, and his eyes questioned her

"I'm engaged to be married,—in earnest."

"Oh!" said Lord Beauprey

"You asked me just now if I had a special reason for having been on the point of telegraphing to you, and I said I had. That was my special reason."

"I see!" said Lord Beauprey. He looked grave for a few seconds, then he gave an awkward smile. But he behaved with perfect tact and discretion, didn't even ask her who the gentleman in the case might be. He congratulated her in the dark, as it were, and if the effect of this was indeed a little odd, she liked him for his quick perception of the fine fitness of pulling up short. Besides, he extracted the name of the gentleman soon enough from her mother, in whose company they now immediately found themselves. Mary left Guy Firminger with the good lady for half an hour before luncheon; and when the girl came back it was to observe that she had been crying again. It was dreadful,—what she might have been saying. Their guest, however, at luncheon was not lachrymose; he was natural, but he was talkative and gay. Mary liked the way he now behaved, and, more particularly, the way he departed immediately after the meal. As soon as he was gone Mrs. Gosselin broke out, suppliantly, "Mary!" But her daughter replied:

"I know, mamma, perfectly, what you're going to say, and if you attempt to say it I shall leave the room." With this threat (day after day, for the following time,) she kept the terrible appeal unuttered until it was too late for an appeal to be of use. That afternoon she wrote to Boston-Brown that she accepted his offer of marriage.

Guy Firminger departed altogether;

he went abroad again and to far countries. He was therefore not able to be present at the nuptials of Miss Gosselin and the young American whom he had entertained at Bosco, which took place in the middle of November. Had he been in England, however, he probably would have felt impelled by a due regard for past verisimilitude to abstain from giving his countenance to such an occasion. His absence from the country contributed to the needed even if astonishing effect of his having been jilted; so, also, did the reputed vastness of Boston-Brown's young income, which, in London, was grossly exaggerated. Hugh Gosselin had perhaps a little to do with this; as he had sacrificed a part of his summer holiday, he got another month and came out to his sister's wedding. He took public comfort in his brother-in-law; nevertheless he listened with attention to a curious communication made him by his mother after the young couple had started for Italy; even to the point of bringing out the inquiry, (in answer to her assertion that poor Guy had been ready to place everything he had at Mary's feet): "Then why the devil didn't he do it?"

"From simple delicacy! He didn't want to make her feel as if she had lent herself to an artifice only on purpose to get hold of him,—to treat her as if she too had been at bottom one of the very harpies she helped him to elude."

Hugh thought a moment. "That was delicate."

"He's the dearest creature in the world. He's on his guard, he's prudent, he tested himself by separation. Then he came back to England in love with her. She might have had it all!"

"I'm glad she didn't get it that way."

"She had only to wait,—to put an end to their deception, harmless as it was, for the present, but still wait. She might have broken off in a way that would have made it come on again better."

"That's exactly what she didn't want."

"I mean as a quite separate incident," said Mrs. Gosselin.

"I loathed their deception, harmless as it was!" her son observed.

Mrs. Gosselin, for a moment, made no answer; then she turned away from the fire into which she had been pensively gazing, with the ejaculation, "Poor dear Guy!"

"I can't for the life of me see that he's to be pitied."

"He'll marry Charlotte Firminger."

"If he's such an ass as that it's his own affair."

"Bessie Whiteroy will bring it about."

"What has she got to do with it?"

"She wants to get hold of him."

"Then why will she marry him to another woman?"

"Because in that way she can select the other,—a woman he won't care for. It will keep him from taking some one that's nicer."

Hugh Gosselin stared,—he laughed out. "Lord, mamma, you're deep!"

"Indeed I am, I see much more."

"What do you see?"

"Mary won't in the least care for America. Don't tell me she will," Mrs. Gosselin added, "for you know perfectly you don't believe it."

"She'll care for her husband, she'll care for everything that concerns him."

"He's very nice, in his little way he's delightful. But as an alternative to Lord Beauprey he's ridiculous!"

"Mary's in a position in which she has nothing to do with alternatives."

"For the present, yes, but not for ever. She'll have enough of your New York; they'll come back here. I see the future dark," Mrs. Gosselin pursued, inexorably musing.

"Tell me then all you see."

"She'll find poor Guy wretchedly married, and she'll be very sorry for him."

"Do you mean that he'll make love to her? You give a queer account of your paragon."

"He'll value her sympathy. I see life as it is."

"You give a queer account of your daughter."

"I don't give any account. She'll behave perfectly," Mrs. Gosselin somewhat inconsequently subjoined.

"Then what are you afraid of?"

"She'll be sorry for him, and it will be all a worry."

"A worry to whom?"

The good lady was silent a moment. "To me," she replied. "And to you as well."

"Then they mustn't come back."

"That will be a greater worry still."

"Surely not a greater,—a smaller. We'll put up with the lesser evil."

"Nothing will prevent her coming to a sense, eventually, of what might have been. And when they both recognise it——"

"It will be very dreadful!" Hugh exclaimed, completing, gaily, his mother's phrase. "I don't see, however," he added, "what in all this you do with Bessie Whiteroy."

"Oh, he'll be tired of her; she's hard, she'll have become despotic. I see life as it is," the good lady repeated.

"Then all I can say is that it's not very nice! But they sha'n't come back; I'll attend to that!" said Hugh Gosselin, who has attended to it up to this time successfully, though the rest of his mother's prophecy is so far accomplished (it was her second hit) as that Charlotte Firminger is now, strange as it may seem, Lady Beauprey.

HENRY JAMES.



## LEAVES FROM A NOTE-BOOK.

## I.

THACKERAY has somewhere commented on the peculiar irony of fate which decreed that G. P. R. James,—that old friend of so many boyhoods—should end his days at Venice: “The only city in Europe where the famous ‘Two Cavaliers’ cannot by any possibility be seen riding together.” One is almost tempted to fancy that the saturnine old beldame must have had a hand in the choice of Dean Burgon’s biographer. Burgon not only held very decided views on the subject of biography, and expressed them as his manner was, in a very decided fashion, but he also practised what he preached in a way not often given to critics, and perhaps not always followed by them when given. In the preface to the *Lives of Twelve Good Men*,—the last book he wrote, which he did not live to see published, but by which probably, more than by anything else he did or said, his fame will live—occurs this notable passage.

I have long cherished the conviction that it is to be wished that the world could be persuaded that biography might with advantage be confined within much narrower limits than at present is customary. Very few are the men who require five hundred pages all to themselves; far fewer will bear expansion into two such volumes. Of how vast a number of our most distinguished friends would forty, fifty, or sixty pages contain all that really requires to be handed down to posterity.

Is it not rather to the biographer that this moral pressure needs to be applied? The world, I take it, could be persuaded very easily. It is indeed conceivable that with a tolerable proportion of our most distinguished friends posterity will not greatly care to concern itself even to the extent of forty pages. But this question has been discussed before in these Leaves;

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and at any rate on the general truth of Burgon’s conviction there is not likely to be much dispute. The man who could show so brave a front to what is really one of the most portentous nuisances of our literary state, and who could moreover practise with such masterly skill what he so courageously preached, deserved a better fate when his own time came to suffer from the too common lot of the Victorian mortal.

It is not of course to be said that there is no good thing in the two ample volumes which Dean Goulburn has compiled to the memory of his friend. They are full of good things, for they are full of Burgon’s own words, and they were always good in the sense that, though sometimes whimsical, sometimes rash, sometimes perhaps inclining to arrogance, they were never flat, tiresome, unmeaning, were always living, never mere dead bones of language. They are full too of that admiring sympathy without some tincture of which, even though we smile at it, when we do not call it by a contemptuous name, no biography can ever be really worth anything; and full also of eloquent passages which invariably redound to the dead man’s praise, if not always to the living man’s judgment. All, or nearly all the materials, in short, are there for such a biography of Burgon as he himself would doubtless have wished to see written, had he wished for one at all, and could himself have written better than any man he left behind him. But such of them as are interesting and essential are encumbered by too much that is neither, and the whole has been put together (thrown together, one is tempted to say) on a most disordered and baffling plan, entailing endless repetitions and complications liable to promote a frame

of mind unsuitable to the contemplation of one whose mission it was to preach peace and good-will to men.

Fortunately there is an easy and a pleasant remedy at hand. The April number of *The Quarterly Review* contains an article on Burgon in which the essential facts of the man have been rescued from these two volumes and presented in a singularly clear and spirited manner, with much of the insight and sympathy that he always brought to his own studies in portraiture, and with more tact and sobriety than he always allowed himself to bring. The subject could for many reasons have been no easy one. The atmosphere of controversy is contagious, and controversy to Burgon in his public capacity seems to have been the very breath of life. It must have been more than commonly difficult so to handle such a master of the strident scourge as to avoid offence to friends or foes, or indeed to both; and this part of his business the reviewer has managed with admirable good taste and good sense, saying all that was needful to preserve his article from mere panegyric, and nothing that could tend to give it a contrary bias. A notable instance of this is the passage wherein he has reduced to reasonable proportions the biographer's startling claim for Burgon that he was "the leading religious teacher of his time," the teacher who "brought all the resources of genius and profound theological learning to rebut the encroachments of rationalism." The passage is too long to quote, but it is really remarkable for the dexterity with which the reviewer has put Burgon in his proper place as the champion of the Written Word, without forgetting the motto he has taken (from Wolsey's bust in Christ Church) for his article, *nomen intra has aedes semper venerandum*, and without, as one may hope and believe, unduly ruffling the feelings of the venerable biographer. Rarely indeed has this peculiarly thorny quarter of the great field of religious controversy been trod more delicately; for without

committing himself to any particular pledge he has contrived to be polite and conciliatory to all sides.

In his *Revision Revised* (which, like his *Lives of Twelve Good Men*, was in great part based upon articles in *The Quarterly Review*) Burgon fell with all his weight, and he could fall very heavily, on that cruel tampering with the most beautiful book in our language. The phrase *attacked* is used much too recklessly of the criticism which refuses to echo the popular cant of the hour; but of Burgon's critical manner it was often sufficiently appropriate. His method of developing his views did indeed not seldom nor remotely suggest that which Mr. Micawber feared he might be led to employ towards his wife's family. On one point however of his attack on the Revisers the general feeling was undoubtedly on his side. Burgon's theories on textual criticism it is for scholars to examine and judge; but his strictures on the diction of the New Version appeal to all who can recognize the beauty and power of the Old Version. All Englishmen are at liberty to marvel at the unmeaning barbarity (and the phrase, though rough, is in truth, not extravagant) which has so often substituted for those grand melodious words of counsel and comfort, that have sunk deep into innumerable thousands of aching hearts, language bald and uncouth as that in which a school-boy renders the sense indeed, and mars all the beauty of Homer and Virgil. The reviewer pertinently quotes the following passage from Matthew Arnold, a critic, as he justly says, but little prejudiced in favour of theologians.

The Dean of Chichester has attacked the revisers with exceeding great vehemence, and many of his reasons for hostility to them I do not share. But when he finally fixes on a test-passage, and condemns them by it, he shows, I must say, a genuine literary instinct, a true sense for style, and brings to my mind that it was given to him to produce, long ago, in an Oxford prize-poem, that excellent line describing Petra,

which Arthur Stanley used to praise so warmly :—

"A rose-red city, half as old as time."

And then Arnold, quoting the two versions of a passage from the first chapter of the Second Epistle of Peter, in contrasting which Burgon thought that he had done enough to condemn the Revisers, adds,—“And so, in truth, he has.” And so in truth will say all readers with any sense for style. If one who is neither scholar nor student may be permitted, I would venture to add another instance to this disastrous passion for meddling which seems to have so strangely seized a body of learned and clever men. In the last chapter of the Book of Revelation,—it was only with the New Testament that Burgon was then concerned—occurs this well-known passage: “I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” In the Revised Version the passage stands: “I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star.” By the removal of one syllable and the alteration of another the whole rhythm of the passage has been hopelessly spoiled without any textual or exegetical advantage.

It was in 1845, after three unsuccessful attempts, that Burgon won the prize for English verse at Oxford with his poem on Petra. He was then in his thirty-second year, a very Nestor among undergraduates, but he had been unable to make his way to the University till the failure of his father's business released him from a commercial career and left him free to follow his own bent which from boyhood had been to the Church. The couplet containing the line so much admired by Stanley runs as follows :

Match me such marvel, save in Eastern  
clime,—  
A rose-red city, half as old as time.

No wonder that it at once caught the popular ear, and received, as the reviewer reminds us, the last honours of

parody by a wit who wished to commemorate the antiquity of a celebrated Don :

Match me such marvel, save in college  
port,  
That rose-red liquor half as old as Short !

Burgon's lines probably share with the couplet from Heber's poem on Palestine suggested by Walter Scott at the memorable breakfast in Brasenose, and one or two from Milman's on the Apollo Belvidere, the distinction of being the only verses inspired by Sir Roger Newdigate that have fixed themselves in the public memory. Such flights of academic fancy as the famous passage which records Nebuchadnezzar's sensations on being

Turned out to grass  
With horned oxen and the savage ass,

belong, it is to be feared, to the region of myth ; though there is more authority for the concluding couplet of that elegy on the murdered Queen of France which did *not* win the prize five-and-twenty years ago :

Then may our lively neighbours ne'er  
forget  
The woes of martyred Marie Antoinette.

But jesting apart, these three men have earned their right to a place in every collection of familiar quotations by virtue of their undergraduate Muse.

When Burgon's couplet went the round of the newspapers on his death, some Devil's Advocate (one is never lacking on such occasions) undertook to show that the thought in the latter half of the last line was stolen from Rogers. Whether he proved his case I do not remember, but the thought by itself is doubtless of no striking originality. For my own part I was more interested about that time in reading the earliest written, but last published book of Sir Henry Layard's Eastern travels, and in finding that Petra had worn to his eyes none of those roseate hues in which Burgon's fancy had steeped them. The surrounding scenery had impressed him

only by "its extreme desolation and savage character," and by "the absence of all vegetation to relieve the solemn monotony of the brown barren soil." The gorge through which the ruins are approached, and on which Dean Stanley has almost exhausted even his picturesque vocabulary, was in Sir Henry's eye only "long" and "narrow." Burgon was born in the East, at Smyrna, where business (the business, as it was called, of a Turkey merchant) kept his father for some years; but he left it too soon to carry any memories of it away with him. In later life, some fifteen years or so after leaving Oxford, he saw Petra with his own eyes. Whether it realized his poetic vision I know not, but for that vision he may have found ample warrant in books, for every traveller, I think, except Sir Henry Layard, has expatiated on the gorgeous tints of the "Red City." It does not follow, however, that Sir Henry's eyes played him false, or that his sense of colour, or his feeling for beauty was cold. Even in the shining Orient much depends upon atmospheric conditions, as much depends under our own bleak skies. From the Gulf of Suez I have seen the rising winter sun paint the grim ranges of Sinai with more colours than ever Turner mixed on his palette; and in the evening hours of an English summer I have seen the cool grey beauty of Magdalen Tower flushed with the light of Burgon's own rose-red dream.

Though Burgon's sense for style was undeniable, it was stronger perhaps in his appreciation than in his practice. In his own writings the proofs of it are somewhat intermittent. But his literary instinct was undoubtedly strong, and never more strongly shown than in his biographical sketches. Some of the Lives of his Twelve Good Men are indeed what the reviewer calls them, models of biography; not models in style, or arrangement, for they are tossed together from a variety of sources and sometimes in rather a haphazard manner: but the general

effect is singularly telling and vivid. He had in truth not a little of "the devouring eye and portraying hand" of Carlyle, an instinct for the salient points of a character or a scene which is not common at least among modern biographies. No one who has read it is likely soon to forget his description of a visit to Martin Routh, that wondrous old President of Magdalen who had seen Johnson in his brown wig scrambling up the steps of University, who had talked with a man who remembered Addison in the common-room of his college, and with a lady whose mother had seen Charles the Second sauntering with his dogs round the walk now known as "the Parks" and "dodging" the Heads of Houses who wished to share the royal leisure. What a picture it is! The room lined with books reaching on their white shelves from floor to ceiling, and huddled up by a blazing fire the little old man, bent almost double (he was in his ninety-first year) half hidden in a wig such as one only sees in old pictures, and clad in the orthodox costume for the Head of a House in the last century, cassock, gown, scarf and bands, shorts and buckles. And then his answer to his visitor's request for advice on his theological studies.

He inquired what I read? "Eusebius, Hooker, and Pearson, very carefully." He nodded. The gravity which by this time his features had assumed was very striking. He lay back in his chair. His head sank forward on his chest, and he looked like one absorbed in thought. "Yes,—I think, sir" (said he after a long pause which, besides raising my curiosity, rather alarmed me by the contrast it presented to his recent animated manner), "I think, sir, were I you, sir—that I would—first of all—read the—the Gospel according to St. Matthew." Here he paused. "And after I had read the Gospel according to St. Matthew—I would—were I you, sir—go on to read—the Gospel according to St. Mark." I looked at him anxiously to see whether he was serious. One glance was enough. He was giving me (but at a very slow rate) the outline of my future course. "I think, sir, when I had read the Gospel according to St. Mark, I would go on, sir,

—to the Gospel according to St. Luke, sir." Another pause, as if the reverend speaker were reconsidering the matter. "Well, sir, and when I had read those three Gospels, sir, were I in your place, I would go on—yes, I would certainly go on to read the Gospel according to St. John."

But I must not go on quoting; the whole scene is inimitable; the scorching fire, the shrill-voiced canary (to whom the works of theology were no care), the ancient sage distilling word by word the best advice that a life-long study of Divinity enabled him to give to one just beginning it,—to read the Gospels! Excellent counsel! who can doubt it? Excellent too that other: "I think, sir, since you care for the advice of an old man, sir, you will find it a very good practice"—(here he looked me archly in the face)—*'always to verify your references, sir.'*" How vivid too is the picture of Charles Marriott, "the Man of Saintly Life," in his dusty, untidy rooms, overflowing with books, pamphlets, catalogues, finishing his sermon while the church-bell was going,—leaning, sprawling rather, over his table, with his ink-bottle secured to his button-hole (like a tax-gatherer); or explaining some perplexing discrepancy in the Fathers, "all very lucid,—all very beautiful,—disjointed, but logically coherent—twitching his hand before his forehead, twitching and scratching, as if he were trying to catch a fly." And this description of one of his breakfast-parties, the characteristic Oxford meal of those days.

An American Bishop, for example, attended by three of his clergy, having crossed the Atlantic, would present himself at Marriott's door,—who instantly asked them all four to breakfast next morning, and sent off cards by his servant to certain of his intimates, who found themselves invited to meet the strangers "to-morrow at 9 o'clock." On his way from Hall or Chapel, or in the street, he would ask another, and another, and another, as he happened to encounter them. Unfortunately he kept no reckoning. The result may be imagined. On entering the dear man's rooms next morning, whereas breakfast had been laid for ten, fifteen guests

had assembled already. While we were secretly counting the tea-cups, another rap was heard, and in came two University Professors. All laughed; but it was no laughing matter, for still another and another person presented himself. The bell was again and again rung: more and more tea and coffee,—muffins and dry toast,—butter and bread,—cream and eggs,—chops and steaks,—were ordered; and "Richard" was begged to "spread my other table-cloth on my other table." The consequence was that our host's violoncello,—fiddle-strings and music-books—printer's proofs and postage-stamps,—medicine-bottles and pill-boxes,—respirator and veil,—grey wrapper for his throat and green shade for his eyes,—pamphlets and letters innumerable,—all were discharged in a volley on to the huge sofa.

It is consoling to know that "Richard's" superhuman exertions were eventually successful, and that the American Bishop and his clergy were, as the narrator puts it, "greatly entertained in more senses than one"; and a "delightful absurdity" they no doubt found it,—for once. To those who remember Oxford about the middle of the 'Sixties this story of a breakfast-party will recall certain other breakfasts in which Burgon played a less sociable part,—those luxurious meals which he accused the young sybarites of Christ Church of smuggling into their rooms on Sunday mornings. Mr. Sandford, then Censor of the House, defended his flock bravely; but the controversy is probably best remembered now as inspiring Mr. Sydney Hall with a subject for one of those clever caricatures in which he has preserved the Oxford life of that generation with a humour and vivacity that his popular pencil has never since surpassed.

Humour and vivacity were qualities never likely to go unrecognized or unappreciated by Burgon. He was gifted with both in a peculiar degree; "His passionate zeal," says the reviewer, "was relieved and enlivened by an exquisitely keen sense of the ludicrous." He says well; and well too when he adds, "Though one of the most devout and reverent of men, he



was not afraid to let his sense of humour play over Scriptural incidents and phrases, or flash from the pulpit at St. Mary's." Few Oxford men of the last five and twenty years will need assurance of this side of Burgon's character. The flashes from the pulpit were rather startling sometimes, and occasionally, perhaps, found rather shocking by some good souls whose sense of the ludicrous was less keen or under better restraint. Historic Doubt has of course thrown its cold shadow over these as over all other popular beliefs; but the traditions of a University are plants of hardy growth, caring as little for the spud of the modern historian as Routh's canary cared for its master's Divinity. Several of Burgon's sallies are more-over beyond scepticism. More than one of my Oxford friends will recall, more accurately than I probably can, how in a certain college chapel the Vicar of St. Mary's (anticipating the warning of Sir James Crichton Browne) delivered his fiery soul on the subject of women's education, then beginning to foreshadow the dangerous follies of our own day: "And when you have perfected this monstrous anomaly of culture, there will not, I suppose, be left even one emasculated man to tell her what a fool she is." It was from his own pulpit that he is said to have concluded one of a series of sermons on John the Baptist with these words: "And now, my brethren, having accompanied John into the wilderness, we will leave him there till next Sunday." From the same place too were heard the words (recalling, if not suggested by, Lord Beaconsfield's famous vote for "the angels") in which he bid those be of good cheer who would not accept Mr. Darwin's theories of their origin: "Let them look for their ancestors in the Zoological Gardens, so long as they will permit us to find ours in the Garden of Eden." For the following instance there is perhaps less foundation. Expatiating once on the fact that in man alone

among the animals could a regular advance be traced, while the others remained now as they were on the first day of their creation, he bid his audience consider "the common ass"; then pausing, leaning forward over his pulpit, and gazing impressively round the expectant church, he added,—"My brothers, you will never see a more perfect ass than you see now."

But let no one who reads these fragments without any previous knowledge of their subject go away with the idea that Burgon was nothing but a fighter and a humourist. Let them rather turn to the reviewer (if they have not patience, or time, for the biographer) and learn from him what manner of man this really was. There they will learn how in truth this man whom the world only knew as "An extraordinarily bitter controversialist; at war with all mankind in turn; sarcastic, uncharitable, censorious; reckless in the imputation of motives, and dealing habitually in language which led so genial a critic as Dean Church to call him that 'dear old learned Professor of Billingsgate,'" was in truth among his own friends the most gentle and generous and loyal of men. Women and children delighted in him; to them he was always the most courteous of companions, the most kindly of play-fellows. They will learn too that he never gave the rein to his fighting spirit save when he conceived that he did well to be angry. "Like John Knox, he never feared the face of man. He did not care a jot if he made enemies in the most influential quarters. Wherever he saw [or thought he saw] disloyalty to faith or morals, he exposed and denounced it without the faintest regard to consequences." *Lenis minimeque pertinax*,—it is good counsel; but there are times and causes when it may be pushed too far. It were dangerous to hold up Burgon's example for general imitation; but in the hour of Gallio such spirits can never come amiss. Few at least will



refuse, to borrow the words of another brave fighter,

A mass, or a prayer, now, good gentlemen,  
For such a bold rider's soul.

## II.

There is something at once both pleasing and touching in Dr. Birkbeck Hill's devotion to the memory of Johnson. Himself a Pembroke man, it is as though a deep sense of filial piety had led him to consecrate his days to the fame of the most celebrated member of the little college nestling under the lordly shadow of Christ Church. Hero-worship is indeed common enough, but it is apt now to take a different complexion from that Carlyle recommended. We mostly prefer our heroes fresh and fresh, as we prefer our eggs. The dead men were very fine fellows in their way, no doubt, and are still occasionally found useful to write about. But your flesh and blood is the only wear for true heroes. Why concern ourselves with speculations on the sheeted phantoms of the past, when we have the fine ripe realities of the present to our hands? Dr. Hill's worship is of the old sort, robust and thorough. His devotion resembles that of the lover who asked,

Oh ! what was love made for, if 'tis not the  
same  
Through joy and through torment, through  
glory or shame ?

He is a proselytizer too, as well as a worshipper. Boswell boasted that he had "Johnsonized the land"; Dr. Hill would re-Johnsonize it. Perhaps his loyal endeavours,

To cut Wales, and bring the old King  
into fashion,

may not prove so successful as he would wish. For in good sooth Johnson's place was settled before Dr. Hill's day, "like the Monument," as the old man said when asked how he felt after the failure of *Irene*. Macaulay's words are as true now as

when they were written nearly forty years ago.

Since his death the popularity of his works,—the *Lives of the Poets*, and, perhaps, *The Vanity of Human Wishes* excepted—has greatly diminished. His Dictionary has been altered by editors till it can scarcely be called his. An allusion to his *Rambler* or his *Idler* is not readily apprehended in literary circles. The fame even of *Rasselas* has grown somewhat dim. But though the celebrity of the writings may have declined, the celebrity of the writer, strange to say, is as great as ever. Boswell's book has done for him more than the best of his own books could do. The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works. But the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive. The old philosopher is still among us in the brown coat with the metal buttons, and the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, and swallowing his tea in oceans. No human being who has been more than seventy years in the grave is so well known to us. And it is but just to say that our intimate acquaintance with what he would himself have called the anfractuosités of his intellect and his temper serves only to strengthen our conviction that he was both a great and good man.

Not many of us, perhaps, besides Dr. Hill, read Johnson now; but we have all a kindly feeling for him. There can be little doubt that he is more popular now than he was in his life. Of all dead men, with the exception of Sir Walter, he is probably the best known and the best liked. But there must have been many of his contemporaries who liked him little. This is how Horace Walpole wrote of him.

With a lumber of learning and some strong parts, Johnson was an odious and mean character. By principle a Jacobite, arrogant, self-sufficient and over-bearing by nature, ungrateful through pride and of feminine bigotry, he had prostituted his pen to party even in a dictionary, and had afterwards for a pension contradicted his own definitions. His manners were sordid, supercilious and brutal; his style ridiculously bombastic and vicious; and in one word, with all the pedantry he had all the gigantic littleness of a schoolmaster.

It is needless to add that this indictment was not published till many years after Walpole's own death. No one pays any heed to it now, though everybody who has read Boswell's book carefully will recognize a grain or two of truth in the monstrous heap. Yet we cannot doubt that there were many "of the great lords and ladies who did not love to have their mouths stopped," who would, with a due regard to their own safety, have gladly subscribed to Walpole's libel while the object of it was still blinking, and rolling, and puffing upon earth. The truth, of course, is that we are no longer afraid of him; he cannot descend on us, "like a hammer on the red son of the furnace." And even his most intimate friends, those who loved and revered him most truly,—Burke and Reynolds, Langton and Beauclerk,—must have felt a little nervous in his presence. No man of whom any record has survived, not even Carlyle, ever dared to be so brutally insolent as Johnson. And it was impossible to guess when, or at what, the slumbering volcano would not burst forth. He loved those whom he chastened, no doubt; but his chastening was apt to be heavy. Our state is happier. The famous "Sir, you are a fool!" passes harmlessly over our heads; muzzle or butt, the pistol has no terror for us; our withers are unwrung. We can afford to treat him as he bid his friends treat the memory of Goldsmith: "Let not his frailties be remembered; he was a very great man."

To this great man Dr. Hill is labouring a great monument. It must already have reached a round dozen of volumes, and he promises us an edition of *The Lives of the Poets* which, edited after his liberal fashion, will materially add to their number. His last instalment consists of two volumes of Johnson's letters, or rather partly of his letters, and partly of a catalogue of his letters. The table of contents shows 1045 in all, of which 341 (so near as I can make out) are only

catalogued; of the rest, 76 are now published for the first time; the balance of 628 (supposing my calculations to be correct) is reprinted from Mrs. Piozzi's collection and other less familiar sources. Johnson cannot take rank among the great letter-writers, among the Walpoles and Grays, the Cowpers and Byrons, the Lambs and Carlyles. His letters are full of good sense of course; and of course many instances of his apt, if somewhat ponderous, felicity of phrase can be found in them. But they do not impress one as the work (to borrow what has been said of Sainte-Beuve's criticisms) "of a man discharging with delight the very office for which he was born"; and this is the mark of all good letters, if not of all good literature. Except to Mrs. Thrale, Johnson's correspondence seems to have been little more than a duty, not always ungrudgingly performed; and in the letters to Mrs. Thrale the "solemn yet pleasing humour," which occasionally sheds a chastened light over the pages of *The Rambler* and *The Idler*, moves rather heavily. He said himself that he put as little as he could in his letters from the fear that they would one day be published. But, "Sir, the man who writes except for money is a fool"; perhaps this was really at the bottom of it. The iron of Grub Street had entered too deep into the old man's soul to leave him free to appreciate the uncovenanted delights of a correspondence. The new letters discovered by Dr. Hill's sleepless energy do not strike me as of any particular importance; but indeed many included in these two volumes are so extremely trivial, and some so extremely dull, that I confess to have made my way rather painfully through the collection. "Mr. Johnson desires Mr. Nicol to send him a set of the last lives, and would be glad to know how the octavo edition goes forward." It is difficult to grow enthusiastic over this sort of thing, and there is not a little of it in these volumes. One has received the

honour of a facsimile,—'twas a desperate hand the Doctor wrote! Dr. Hill calls it "the gem of his collection"; I suppose because it is the only one that has been discovered from Johnson to his wife. It refers to a bad leg from which "dearest Tetty" was suffering, and which she is exhorted to get cured so soon as may be, which somehow suggests Mr. Winkle's advice to Mr. Pickwick when that good gentleman found himself in the pond. It is not otherwise remarkable, except for the phrase "my dear girl," which has a half pathetic comicality about it coming from a husband of thirty to a wife on the brink of her fifty-first year.

Whatever be the importance of this collection the spirit which has inspired it is beyond all praise. Perhaps if Dr. Hill could have exercised a little more restraint in his fondness for notes, the value of this, as of his previous publications, would not have been lessened. He evidently does not share his idol's sentiments: "Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils." Sometimes he is rather inclined to make them unnecessary evils. It seems a pity too that he has exerted himself so sedulously to pare away all the "nodosities and anfractuosities" of the great man. Are they not part and parcel not only of the man, but of the man's greatness? Does it not prove not only the essential vigour of his intellect, but also the essential goodness of his nature, that with all these disqualifications he yet rose to the position he held in perhaps the brightest, the wittiest, and, in the true sense of the word, the best society that books have preserved for us? The contortions of the Sibyl, to borrow Burke's felicitous phrase, add fresh point to the inspiration. To labour to show that Johnson and his surroundings were cast in the common pattern is not the way to re-Johnsonize the land, but rather to un-Johnsonize it. Yet Dr. Hill seems to wish to represent his idol as others are, only cleverer and

better; and, perhaps as a natural consequence, he is apt to grow very indignant with everybody (except Boswell) who stands in the way of this mistaken endeavour. There is a singular instance of this in the preface to these volumes. Commenting on the letter to "Dearest Tetty" he has this extraordinary passage.

Well! she was twenty years older than Johnson, and no doubt deserved some of the ridicule which Lord Macaulay has so lavishly cast upon her. Nevertheless at the time of the marriage she was of just the same age as was Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland, when our great historian describes her as "no longer young, but still retaining some traces of that superb and voluptuous loveliness which twenty years before overcame the hearts of all men." For all we know it was Mrs. Johnson's "superb and voluptuous loveliness which overcame the heart" of the lamented Mr. Porter, the Birmingham mercer, and it was the traces of it which overcame young Samuel Johnson. She was only a decent married woman; had she been a royal harlot, Macaulay, instead of mocking her "ceruse bloom," might himself have laid on the colours with an ardour and skill scarcely surpassed by Sir Peter Lely.

It is a pity that somebody at the Clarendon Press could not have saved Dr. Hill from this unfortunate exhibition, which can only suggest to those who do not know him that he is equally ignorant of Macaulay's writings and of Boswell's. Macaulay admired Johnson quite as sincerely, if not quite so exuberantly, as Dr. Hill, and understood him, if one may so, quite as well. He has lavished no ridicule on Mrs. Johnson, nor ever doubted her husband's devotion to her, on which indeed he has written very justly and tenderly. In reviewing Boswell's book he has described Tetty as she is there described by people who had known her both in Birmingham, Lichfield, and London; and, with all his industry and research, Dr. Hill will hardly claim to be a better judge at least of the personal appearance of a woman who died one hundred and forty years ago than men who had seen her and

spoken with her. To talk of Macaulay's being willing to flatter a woman because she was a King's mistress is as ridiculous as it would be to talk of Dr. Hill's being willing to abuse Macaulay because his two essays have contributed more to the general knowledge of Johnson than all Dr. Hill's agreeable volumes. Apart from the astounding confusion of the argument, scarcely credible in a member of the University which has always been regarded as the particular training-ground of the reasoning faculties, to suggest that "for all we know" Elizabeth Porter was as beautiful a woman as Barbara Palmer is as idle as it would be to suggest that young Samuel Johnson may "for all we know" have been as comely as Windham and as courteous as Langton, and only proves to what depths a clever man can descend when he allows himself to confound his antipathies with his duties. Mrs. Johnson's appearance, manners, and temper are in truth little less familiar to us

than are those of her illustrious husband. Indeed the whole passage might be described in the words Dr. Hill has permitted himself to use elsewhere of the same great writer (who has indeed had the misfortune to differ from him on more than one point) as "an unjust and insulting attack." But it would perhaps be better described in the words with which Johnson rebuked one of his friends for a silly question, "Tush, Sir, you speak childishly." Let us hope that when the time for a new edition comes Dr. Hill will cancel this passage. He will remember who said: "When I was beginning the world and was nothing and nobody, the joy of my life was to fire at all the established wits." That is a joy one may pardon in a brisk lad penning his first paragraph for the newspapers. It does not become a gentleman who has long risen beyond these delusive amusements, and who is moreover, as all his friends can testify, naturally inclined to be unjust and insulting to no man.

## THE STRANGER IN THE HOUSE.

THE present Parliament is dragging slowly towards its end, and it must frankly be admitted that everybody engaged in carrying on its business has the appearance of being thoroughly tired of it. My fellow strangers still flock into the galleries, not knowing what is in store for them, but vaguely expecting something wonderful to happen. This is the time of year when the country constituent begins to make his appearance on the scene, and his idea is that he can get admission to the gallery at any moment, and take his "missus" in with him. In vain does his Member explain that orders have to be applied for in advance, and that the few places in the Ladies' Gallery are balloted for a week beforehand. The voter from the provinces does not understand or believe this. There is the House straight before him, and there stands his "missus," fully alive to the fact that her husband's vote is a thing worth having, and that the day is coming when it will be most humbly sought for by both sides. The Member offers to take her round the House and to the inner lobby, where Members and newspaper correspondents are to be seen. Beyond the stern janitors who guard the entrance, and close to the door of the House itself, is a queer little bench upon which a couple of ladies may stand, and there look straight forward at the Speaker himself, with the great men, or the little men in great positions, ranged on either side of him. It is better to give the constituent's wife this furtive peep into the Chamber than let her go away having seen nothing but the outer lobby. But I have known good votes lost through sheer inability on the part of the harassed Members to get any more orders that day; for people who are disappointed will sometimes strike out without much regard for fair play,

and a man's wife has great influence with him in these matters. He has brought her to London to enjoy herself, and his Member pretended that he could not get her into the House of Commons, although everybody knows that a gallery is set apart for the special use of ladies. This is a grievance of the kind which no political services can atone for. And that is why the ordinary Member dreads the return of the season when cheap excursions to London set in from all parts of the country, and he cannot go out into the lobby without finding half-a-dozen of his dear friends and supporters waiting for him. The great leaders can sometimes get a young colleague to manage this part of the business for them, although I have seen Mr. Gladstone stand bareheaded in the corridor of the outer lobby, waiting upon a Midlothian constituent with a pass to the gallery.

Strangers do not mind a dull evening in the House, for at any rate they can feast their eyes on men whom the newspapers have made famous. They are all easily recognised, thanks to the multiplication of photographs. It would be impossible for a visitor from the most remote of colonial wilds to mistake Mr. Gladstone for anybody else, and the identity of Sir William Harcourt is never likely to give rise to much dispute. Mr. John Morley is not so generally known, and the other occupants of the front Opposition bench do not appear to be objects of much interest in the eyes of the casual stranger. The little knot of Liberal Unionists who were accustomed to sit in one corner, greatly to the disgust of their former colleagues, have lost one-third of their number by the removal of Lord Hartington to the House of Lords. Mr. Chamberlain

and Sir Henry James still remain, but strangers very seldom ask to have them pointed out. They want to see Mr. Balfour, because they have heard so much about him; and they look with a certain degree of interest on Mr. Matthews, who has the power of saving men and women condemned to death, or of letting them go to their doom—a power which no Minister would desire to have placed in his hands if he could possibly help himself. When some really doubtful case arises, in which the great body of the public take an active interest, and the newspapers are clamouring loudly for or against a commutation of the sentence, Mr. Matthews must have some very anxious and unpleasant moments. Perhaps the judge who tried the case is wavering, and the Home Secretary goes all over the facts with him, and considers any new circumstances which have come to the knowledge of the Crown after sentence was pronounced. Or it may be that the pressure from outside, as in the instance of Mrs. Maybrick, is so great that it is scarcely possible to resist it. As a rule, however, Mr. Matthews has stood out firmly for the principle that in the absence of new facts which would have affected the decision of the jury had they been made known on the trial, the Home Secretary has no right to interfere with the course of the law. For adhering to this rule he has been very much abused from time to time, but when the excitement has passed away it has generally been acknowledged that he was right. In the Lipski case, press and public alike demanded the release of the convict, and one paper proved conclusively that Lipski must have been innocent because he was not near the scene of the murder when it was committed. Mr. Matthews came to a different conclusion, and had no doubt of the man's guilt. Yet it was perhaps a relief to his mind when a full confession of every detail of the crime was brought to him from the hands of Lipski himself. He was told, as he

has been told since, that he committed a "judicial murder," but a Home Secretary in these days must be prepared for such compliments. In many respects, it is the least desirable post in the Ministry, but it carries with it a great deal of influence and power, and I do not think it can fairly be said that Mr. Matthews has ever abused either. He has stood his ground right well against storms which would have driven weaker mortals from the field. The Irish never cease to remind him that he was once a Home Ruler, almost a Fenian, and the bigoted take care that it shall not be forgotten that he is a Roman Catholic. He has a curious way of holding up two fingers when he is addressing the House, after the manner of a Catholic Prelate blessing the congregation. Perhaps he is not aware of that; many persons are quite unconscious of their mannerisms. Mr. Gladstone, for example, probably does not know that he is in the habit of scratching the top of his head with his thumb-nail. There is a well-known Member who takes himself into custody by a firm grip on his collar whenever he rises to speak, and another finds relief from his nervousness by buttoning and unbuttoning his waistcoat. A third will begin a speech at one end of a bench and finish it at the other end, not having the slightest idea that he has moved an inch. The British "er, er," pronounced in a sonorous tone by way of filling up gaps, is heard in its greatest perfection from Sir William Harcourt. Until he gets well started and warmed up, his speech consists mainly of "er, er." Mr. John Morley has a trick of doubling himself nearly in two, and then starting back as if a spring were suddenly touched. Mr. Balfour anchors himself fast to the box on the table, that box which has so often been pounded by great men, and into which I was, once curious enough to look, expecting to find objects of great rarity and interest. It contained nothing more



wonderful than copies of the oath and the Testament on which new members are sworn.

What we as listeners up aloft like most is a man who says what he has to say in a plain and straightforward manner, and then sits down. The honest truth is that there are very few such men in the House. It is not everybody, even in the foremost rank, who knows when his argument is really concluded, and when he ought to make an end of it. A private Member will sometimes make a great success for himself by seizing precisely the right moment to sit down. The consequence is that the House is sure to listen to him the next time he rises to speak. But the official or the ex-official does not care. He must be heard, and he rarely scruples to take advantage of his position. Certain members of the privileged class are great offenders in this respect. The House of Commons is a body brought together chiefly for the purpose of listening to them. But the tide of Democracy is always advancing, for good or evil, and the rank and file of both parties, especially of the Radicals, are no respecters of persons. They are not to be frightened with a name. When Mr. Gladstone himself is interrupted by murmurs from behind, and his authority is set at naught, what can humbler mortals expect? Does a man happen to catch the humour of the moment, and fall in with the mood of his audience? If so, he will be listened to. If he is not so lucky, he will be as coldly received and as sharply criticised as if he were a bumptious new Member. There is no reverence for anybody in these days. The Conservatives, as I have before been obliged to remark, show more fidelity and generosity towards their leaders than the Radicals, but the spirit of loyalty is not what it used to be. The divinity that doth hedge a king is all gone. Sir Robert Peel, stalking through the lobbies without condescending to exchange a word with any of his followers, would

in these days find himself attacked right and left, and his party would be very likely to take the first opportunity of leaving him in a minority. The thing for a leader to do now is to make himself universally agreeable. He must put on no "airs." Tom, Dick, and Harry must be free to go up and speak to him. It may cost him an effort to reply in the proper manner to them all; but to snub them would be a far more costly operation in the end. Robust health, a capacity for enduring great fatigue, and attractive social qualities, these are the endowments with which the ambitious politician ought to start when he enters Parliament. He may have as many more as nature or art has conferred upon him, but without these he cannot go far.

It is very different in the House of Lords, to which I sometimes get admission, and which in its way presents quite as interesting a subject for study as what is facetiously called the Lower House. There the men of activity are quite out of their element. There is scarcely ever any business going on which an outsider can comprehend. A Bill is whisked through Committee within five minutes of its title being read. Nothing but a debate of unusual importance, which in favourable years takes place once or twice during a session, will induce "My Lords" to remain when the hands of the clock point to the approach of the dinner-hour. They get up to speak when they like, they introduce any subject they please, there is no one to call them to order if they drag in ever so many irrelevant topics, and if two noble lords rise together, the House has to determine, by a vote if necessary, which shall be heard. For the Lord Chancellor, who seems to be acting as chairman, is in reality a mere dummy; a figure-head, whose presence is necessary for the transaction of business, except when the House is in Committee, but who has no power to keep order, and no control over the august personages who

surround him. He cannot "name" an unruly peer, and if he presumed to check discussion he would extinguish no one but himself. There are such persons as unruly peers, ancient men who insist on coming forward when the Prime Minister has risen to speak, and who will not sit down until some one has solemnly moved that they "be not heard." After that they keep on beginning a speech which is never destined to be finished, until the doorkeepers inform them that the "House has risen." Then they float away in a ghostly sort of manner, sometimes to the Peers' Gallery in the House of Commons, where they doze out the remainder of the interval before dinner. Except on important occasions, it is to an audience of half-a-dozen of these curiosities of the peerage that a member of the House of Lords has to address himself when he wishes to make a speech. He need not "ballot for a place," it is true, for there is nothing to prevent him discussing Shakespeare and the musical glasses, or any other subject that strikes his fancy, whenever the House is open. In that respect he has a great advantage over members of the other House. But it is not easy to deliver a speech to rows of empty benches. Even when a set debate is going on, and an audience of moderate dimensions has assembled, the atmosphere of the House is depressing. A faint murmur is the nearest approach to applause that is ever heard there. A noble lord of a humorous turn perhaps detects an opportunity for treating some question in a light and pleasant vein. Before he has got far on his road an icy chill creeps into his blood. Just below him or in front of him is the Prime Minister, drumming upon his knees with his fingers, evidently waiting impatiently for the farce to come to an end. A little further on there are some bishops in full panoply, and few men have the hardihood to make jokes in the presence of half-a-dozen bishops. Several distinguished persons are asleep, and others get up

and walk out in the midst of the speaker's best points. Presently Lord Salisbury rises to reply, slowly and unwillingly. He utters a few sharp sarcasms in a hard voice, disposes briefly of some reflections which have been made on his policy, declines altogether to go into the general question, and crumples up his ambitious critic with a remorseless hand. Every sentence goes home like a bullet. In a few minutes the debate is over, and the noble lord who originated it resolves as he goes homewards that he will try the experiment no more. The younger men who have anything in them are apt to lament their hard fate in that they are compelled to belong to the Upper House at all. Lord Rosebery, although he has no great cause to complain of his position, makes no secret of his regret that the House of Commons cannot be the scene of his exertions. It is a good thing no doubt for a public man to begin his career there, as Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Salisbury, the Duke of Devonshire, and so many others have done. They have the chance of making a reputation which may at least be preserved when they are summoned to the Lords. Sometimes it may even be increased. More frequently it comes to an end and is speedily forgotten. The last we see or hear of once prominent men is their elevation to the peerage. It was so in the case of Mr. Robert Lowe, who sank completely below the horizon long before his eyesight failed him. He may still be seen now and then in one of the side galleries, like Lord Tennyson's Tithonus, "a white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream." When Benjamin Disraeli was transformed into the Earl of Beaconsfield his health was already failing, and he had no desire to create a new reputation for himself in the Upper House. He was Prime Minister, and he confined himself to the official replies which were required by the business of the day. The old flames burst out again at long intervals, but there was no one in front of him who

had the power to disperse the lethargy which seemed gradually to close in upon him. Lord Granville could be pungent at times, but "Dizzy" regarded him with patient tolerance, and never answered him in a spirit of acerbity. When the Conservatives were defeated in 1880 their leader practically received his death-blow. He felt confident that the measure of his days would not permit him to see the return of his party to office. Gradually his power departed from him, and his mantle fell upon Lord Salisbury, who was not always an admirer of the "Asian mystery."

The House of Lords never fills up for the sake of hearing any one speak, unless the programme is announced beforehand. There is no "floating audience" in the libraries or the lobbies. In the House of Commons it frequently happens that there are not a score of Members visible, but let the division bells ring and some three or four hundreds will speedily make their appearance. They will also flock in to listen to some important speech, whereas in the Lords there are no relays of idlers who can be brought upon the field of action. The House, however, is never likely to be empty when it is known that Lord Salisbury or the Duke of Argyll intends to speak. The Prime Minister is, of course, sure to command attention by virtue of what he has to say, but apart even from that he would always be what theatrical people call a "draw." Not that he is an orator, any more than his nephew Mr. Balfour is one. His manner is monotonous, his voice harsh, his general bearing not by any means captivating. But before he has uttered half-a-dozen sentences one recognises the fact that here is a man who speaks from full knowledge or reflection, and who goes straight to the very heart of the matter which he is discussing. What Mr. Disraeli meant when he said that Lord Salisbury's gibes "lacked finish" I have never been able to conjecture. Finish, the highest literary finish, is stamped upon almost everything Lord

Salisbury says. You could scarcely transpose a word, much less strike one out, without doing him an injury. There is no one in either House to equal him in this respect, for Mr. Gladstone is undeniably verbose at times, and his sentences often get into a tangle which no man but himself could unravel. Lord Salisbury never wanders, never introduces parenthetical remarks, never heaps up words unnecessarily. If he is attacking he strikes home. Sometimes he is very incautious, but he is merely expressing his opinions without diplomatic reserve. He is not talking at random. He is a Tory, obliged at the present moment to carry on a good deal of Radical legislation for the sake of holding the Unionist party together. That this *rôle* is altogether to his mind may be doubted. Now and again his real sentiments will force themselves into notice, and then there is consternation among many of his followers. The allusions to "black men" and to "Hottentots" were not wise, but even a Prime Minister is not always proof against the temptation to say what he really thinks. One thing is certain, Lord Salisbury is by far the ablest man the Tories have got in their ranks, and one of the ablest to be found today in the public life of any country. That he is popular with the "masses" is not very likely, for he has never gone in and out among them in the way that Mr. Gladstone has done. And he certainly cannot be accused of having sought to gain popularity by any unworthy artifices.

But to return to the place in which I am more at home, in my casual fashion. What has been going on there? For some time, parties on both sides the House were content with marking time. Mr. Balfour has made himself familiar with his duties and is now very rarely to be caught at a disadvantage. The Tories generally have mustered in sufficient numbers, but I see great gaps in the Gladstonian ranks, and the Irish members show a great disinclination to take part in active

business. Mr. Dillon and Mr. William O'Brien stow themselves away, as I am informed, under the gallery, where they are not visible to strangers. The whole business in which they once took so great a pleasure has become hateful to them. Perhaps they did not love Mr. Parnell, but they have found out how difficult it is to get on without him. One of the ablest of the band, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, is now rarely seen in the House, there being no longer a rallying point round which all these sharpshooters and skirmishers can assemble. Mr. T. P. O'Connor must be ranked among the most effective speakers of his party, and the House always listens to him with interest, but he is "not i' the vein" just now, and the mere drudgery of Parliament evidently has not the same attraction for him which it appears to have for Mr. Sexton. Those who claim to be the true political heirs of Mr. Parnell, led by Mr. John Redmond, are standing quietly aside waiting for an opportunity to try their strength against Mr. Gladstone. But at present the old campaigner is too much for them; he contrived to spike poor Mr. Blane's gun without allowing his hand to be seen. His position may have its weak points, but it will require a more formidable antagonist than Mr. Blane to rout him out of it. The great difficulty is to keep the English and Welsh Radicals in proper subjection. The Welsh are a particularly awkward team to handle just now, for

they have been reinforced during the last few years by a little knot of industrious and clever young men who have completely driven Mr. Dillwyn and the older leaders into the background. Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. S. Evans, and Mr. T. Ellis, have more than once shown that they decline to make any compromise with their principles even upon the advice of Mr. Gladstone. They are Irreconcilables, demanding the first place for Wales, even upon the question of Home Rule. Mr. Labouchere himself cannot bring this skittish contingent into regular line. In fact Mr. Labouchere, since he has been nominated for office by so many of his party organs, has adopted a dignified attitude, and rarely condescends to appear as the "chartered libertine" of Radicalism. That part has been taken up with much vigour by Mr. Cuninghame Graham, who intends to show his predecessor and rival a variety of new tricks before the Session is over. To sum up in the face of Mr. Speaker and the House his opinion of the "whole concern," in the terse language once used by the Duke of Wellington, and on a subsequent occasion to go and sit in Mr. Gladstone's place with his feet elevated upon the table, was to advance a good deal beyond any point hitherto reached by Mr. Labouchere. The strangers in the gallery may reasonably look to Mr. Graham for a good deal of solid entertainment from time to time.